



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

385



6000420331

33.

383.

AN INQUIRY
INTO
THE POOR LAWS
AND
SURPLUS LABOUR,
ETC. ETC.

[Price Two Shillings and Sixpence.]

LONDON:
J. MOYNS, CASTLE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.

AN INQUIRY
INTO
THE POOR LAWS

AND
SURPLUS LABOUR,
AND
THEIR MUTUAL REACTION:

WITH
A POSTSCRIPT,
CONTAINING
OBSERVATIONS ON THE COMMUTATION OF TITHES, AND
REMARKS ON LORD MILTON'S ADDRESS
ON THE CORN-LAWS.

“ Si quantum pauperum est venire huc, et liberis suis petere pecunias cœperint, singuli nunquam exsatiabuntur, respublica deficiet. Languescet alloqui industria, intendetur accordia, si nullus ex se metus aut spes; et securi omnes aliena subsidia expectabunt, sibi ignavi, nobis graves.—*Tac. Ann.* lib. ii. c. 38.

By WILLIAM DAY, Esq.
ONE OF THE MAGISTRATES OF THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX.

13

SECOND EDITION, ENLARGED.

LONDON:
JAMES FRASER, 215, REGENT STREET.

M.D.CCCXXXIII.

383.



AN INQUIRY, &c.

THE following observations, as far as practicable, are condensed that they may be read—they are circulated that they may be reasoned upon. Every candid attempt of this kind merits respect, for even a failure has its own utility. Where the harbour of truth is not beacons by the irradiations of genius, the course to it may sometimes be indicated by the buoys that float on the shallows that beset it; and truths of the highest nature in philosophy have been demonstrated by shewing the absurdity involved in every other hypothesis.

With respect to the term “surplus labour” used in these pages, it appears to me to embrace two conditions of the question; the one, where the labour cannot be employed at all, so as to yield the ordinary rate of profit upon the outlay; the other, where it would yield the profit, but is unemployed simply from the deficiency of capital. The former is the naked and abstract surplus labour, the other is only *sub modo*. The one *can* be removed only by amputation—the other *may*, by the diversion into the channel of agriculture of

more capital. That this latter case is impossible,* I am not prepared to say; but until it is effected, by whatever means, the surplus labour of the one origin is as detrimental as that of the other, and however they may differ in cause, they are identical in effect. With the causes of an evil we are concerned only as that by the knowledge of them we may be the better enabled to administer to the disease. If the cause be beyond our control,

* That more capital to any extent could be *profitably* employed in agriculture, under existing circumstances, appears to me very questionable. Were it so, how happens it that of so much unemployed capital as exists at present, hardly any part of it should be diverted into this channel? or why do those farmers and yeomen who are known to have proportionally more capital than the ordinary tenants, or at any rate in the latter case more credit, and consequently the power of borrowing, in the mass farm so little better than their neighbours? Besides, too, if more capital were employed *generally*, it must create more produce. Would not this have the same effect on the markets as an abundant harvest? And should we not have a continual succession of years and prices similar to those of 1820, 1821, 1822, &c., until from the great loss occurring, the extra capital were again withdrawn, and a surplus population again weighing us down? More capital may be employed with advantage on any given farm, because the additional produce raised by it is too small to affect the market; it is otherwise were this to take place over the whole kingdom; and could we suppose 10 per cent additional capital employed on the land, it is more than probable that it would have the effect not only of yielding no profit on itself, but of absolutely lowering that which now exists on the present capital. The fallacy lies, as is too generally the case, in arguing from particulars to generals.

we must still endeavour to alleviate the malady as the symptoms of the case best admit. But it is worse than folly to deny an evil, because by possibility it might not exist under different circumstances, or a state which we cannot command, or to trust to the chances of futurity for remedying that, of which we have a confident hope of cure in our immediate power. What reason have we for anticipating that the future will be more propitious to us than the present, or rather that it will not have increased the evil in a tenfold degree?

Two modes have been devised for absorbing the redundancy of labour, which it is necessary for me to notice: the one, by the compulsory employment of it by means of labour-rates, of which I shall speak hereafter; the other, by home colonisation,* or cottage allotments. To those

* Home colonization has been particularly recommended, amongst other writers, by Mr. Jacob; and he has written a tract describing the advantages that have arisen from it at Frederick's Oord, in Holland. It is, perhaps, sufficient for my purpose to observe, that the expense of locating each family there (averaging 6½ individuals) amounted to 141*l.* 13*s.*, double the cost per head of sending any of our paupers to America. At the time of his writing, it had existed only seven years, and it seems to have owed a great part of its success to the rigid superintendence of its projector, General Vanden Bosch. The real trial of the principle of it, however, will be in about another ten years, when it will be necessary to swarm off a fresh hive, and to find a new capital for their increased and increasing numbers, at the rate of 22*l.* 6*s.* 7*d.* per head, to enable them to establish a new, or a more extended colony.

who conceive that the surplus labour may be absorbed by the latter favourite system, I will address this observation : If to the present generation you grant these allotments as a favour, what is to prevent the next and increasing one from expecting them as a right ? Are you prepared to provide land indefinitely (and that too of the best description) for an indefinite number of claimants ? Are you willing to sanction an agrarian law, and to see Irish potato-gardens the established system of the country ? The legislators of Elizabeth saw in their enactment the palliative of a present evil ; but they little imagined that the short space of two centuries would create from it a tax to the amount of one-seventh of the value of the land. Let us then pause before we attempt to fasten on ourselves a new burden, and be sure that we do not deceive ourselves in its effects. For where is the difference between allotting the land itself to the use of the poor, or a portion of the revenues that arise from it ?

But suppose, as we are told, that the rent, and the full rent, not only for the land but for the buildings, is paid, and that it becomes a profitable, and consequently a general speculation. Is there then no fear of a trade in cottages and cottage-gardens ? Is there no ground for apprehending a universal and alarming subletting ? There are now about half a million of agricultural labourers' families in England, and 27,000,000 of cultivated

acres. Allow two acres as an allotment to each family, and suppose the rate of increase in the population to continue at its present rate (viz. 37 per cent in twenty years), and in nearly the same time that has elapsed from the 43d Eliz. to the present period, the sum of the allotments would amount to 43,000,000 of acres, or more than half as much again as the whole cultivated land in the kingdom. Nor can this appear more incredible to us than our present amount of rate would have appeared in the time of Elizabeth. It may not be amiss to remark here, that at the present rate of increase in the population, every 100 individuals in 40, 80, 160, and 240 years, become respectively 187, 352, 1240, and 4371 persons.

There is also another point to be considered in cottage allotments,—the sum of them will either be insufficient, sufficient, or more than sufficient, for the maintenance of those located on them. If insufficient, there will still be a charge to the community, increasing as the population increases: if more than sufficient, then will you encourage that population, you will place the surplus labourer in a better condition than the hard-working day-labourer, and you will divert from its legitimate purpose a portion of the land (*and ultimately a very large one*) upon which agricultural capital should be made productive: if sufficient only, then there will be no return to the community, there will be as absolute a loss as if the allot-

ments and their tenants, like Korah and his companions of old, had been swallowed up and destroyed.

In making these observations on cottage allotments, I by no means intend to impugn the beneficence of their object, or to deny their utility in *occasional* instances. The active benevolence of individuals, accompanied by a due discrimination of character, has by this means placed many deserving labourers in a situation they could never otherwise have hoped to have attained. But I wish to guard against confounding that part of their effects which has arisen from the activity and charity of their patrons, with that which is to be considered as inherent in the system if left to work of itself. They may, indeed, be ancillary to it, but must never be depended upon as the paramount and searching remedy for the evils that we are struggling with.

With respect to the general condition of the labouring class, I apprehend that the rate of wages paid at present, viz. from 10s. to 12s. per week, is as high, and perhaps higher, in proportion to the price of wheat, than at any other period. I am of opinion also, that the labourer who is in *steady* employ at these prices, is in as prosperous a condition not only as he ever was, but as, under the ordinary state of things, he can ever be. Sir William Petty states the price of labour about the middle of the 17th century at 8d. per day. Adam

Smith and Kent (Hints to Gentlemen Farmers) mention in their time (1773) 14*d.* as the ordinary rate of wages. In addition, moreover, to the price of wages actually paid, is the fund distributed in the shape of relief to the amount of 6,000,000*l.* per annum, a portion of which ought to be added to the current rate of wages, and which in point of fact is added where the family exceeds a certain number.

Notwithstanding this, however, a large proportion of the labouring population is in a deplorable condition, and, as far as my inquiries lead me, to a much greater extent than at any former period.

This distress I apprehend to arise principally from two causes ; the one natural, the other artificial.

The *first* is the progressive increase of the number of labourers, while the fund of labour itself has been stationary, or even declining ; in other words, the increase of labourers beyond the means of existing capital to employ them. As this is a point much in dispute, I shall insert the facts as they appear in the district in which I reside, and in which I act as a magistrate. Our division of petty sessions comprehends the following eleven parishes, the population of which is almost exclusively agricultural, and the censuses of which I subjoin :—

Place.	1801.	1811.	1821.	1831.
Buxted . . .	1063	1292	1509	1642
Chiddingly . .	673	739	870	902
East Hothly . .	395	468	510	505
Framfield . . .	969	1074	1437	1468
Horsted . . .	207	235	286	300
Isfield*. . . .	334	464	569	581
Maresfield . .	960	1117	1439	1650
Mayfield . . .	1849	2079	2698	2738
Rotherfield . .	1963	2122	2782	3085
Uckfield† . . .	811	916	1099	1261
Waldron . . .	752	840	965	997
Total . . .	9976	11346	14164	15129

Increase in 30 years 50 per cent.

Do. in last 20 years 33

Do. in last 10 years 6·8

NOTE.—The increase in *the whole county* (exclusive of the towns of Brighton, Chichester, Hastings, and Lewes) in the last twenty years, is from 161,577 to 204,707, or 26 + per cent. This population I apprehend to be purely agricultural. It gives an average increase of about 158 souls in each parish, the average present population being 752.

The accuracy of the census of 1801 has been generally disputed; assuming then the census of 1811 for the purpose of my argument, we find that there are now 133 labourers to do the same work that was then done by 100. I say the same work, but I should be justified in saying less; for as the

* Here is a paper-mill.

† Silk-mill.

profits of agriculture have declined, and the capital of the farmer deteriorated, so has the state of tillage and the general cultivation of the land. As I consider this point of the argument to be of vital importance to a just view of the subject, I beg to explain that I mean, that the same physical force which effectuated a certain state of cultivation in 1811 (without reference to what was left undone), would effect the same in 1831; and if that is now done by the application of a greater number of labourers, it must be by assigning less work to the share of each.

Much error has also arisen upon this point by the doctrine, that additional capital might be applied to the present condition of the land, so as to employ the whole increase of our agricultural population. It must be borne in mind, that all the parts of agricultural capital do not bear the same rate of profit.* If a manufacturer can employ 1000*l.* so as to yield him a profit of 10 per cent, he can employ, *cæteris paribus*, a second 1000*l.* so

* As vegetation is compounded of other parts besides the soil, and as these will not increase in power like it, the subsequent advances in fructification will be gradually slower than the first step. The air, the light, the heat, the rain, are all component parts of vegetation, which are not susceptible of increase, but only of a more judicious application. If the same application of labour and manure be furnished through three successive rotations, the production of the third crop may be double that of the first; but in the sixth rotation they will not

as to yield him the same. But if a farmer makes 10 per cent upon his 1000*l.* *on a given farm*, it by no means follows that he can employ an additional 1000*l.* with the same result; on the contrary, if his original 1000*l.* is sufficient for the just working of his farm, the second will only yield him (say) 5 per cent, so that this would reduce the profit on his whole capital to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent: rather than this, he will hire an occupation of double the extent, and make his 10 per cent upon his whole capital. There is, however, no doubt but that the capital generally used on the land is insufficient even for obtaining the maximum of profit; and this again reacts by producing under-cultivation, and a consequently diminishing ratio in the capital of the tenantry.

It is needless here to observe more than that the fund for the payment of labour is, under all circumstances, limited. In every farm the gross produce, when brought to market and converted, is applicable to a variety of purposes before any part of it can be applied to the labour of the en-

be double that of the third, nor will the twelfth be double that of the sixth. This remark, though known near twenty centuries ago, is one of the *discoveries* of modern political economy, which, though true, is by no means new, although it has been applauded as such by the initiated, when couched in their technical phraseology, thus; "the ratio of the net produce of the land to its gross produce is, in the progress of improvement in cultivation, continually diminishing."—JACOB.

suing year. There will be rates and taxes, tithe, bills for the wear and tear of stock, and the interest upon the capital employed. If this last should not be produced, the capital itself would be ultimately sunk or withdrawn. It is the residue then of the gross produce that remains for labour and rent: abandoning rent, it is evident that the state of the labourers in every parish must depend upon the sufficiency of this fund to find employment for their entire number at fair wages. If this fund is insufficient, either part of the labourers must remain unemployed, or the whole must receive reduced wages. It is evident that the poorer the land is, the less this surplus produce must be, and consequently the less will be the power of maintaining the labouring population. In the event of any alteration of the existing laws which should have the effect of throwing out of cultivation the poor lands in this kingdom, I am totally unable to see any funds which would support the agricultural and existing population of such parishes.

The *second* cause of the distress of the labouring class is artificial, and arises from the practice and administration of the poor-laws. In practice (whatever may have been the original intention), when a labourer ascertains that there is no work to be obtained in a parish, he applies to an overseer to find him that *work which, by the conditions of the question, is not to be had*. The surplus

labourer is driven by the overseer into the market to compete with the regular workman ; his work is offered at a reduced price, or he is even billeted, and his pay derived entirely from the rates. With this cheap labourer the regular one can stand no chance ; he is undersold in his own market, and his only property, the work of his hands and the sweat of his brows, is wrested from him, or lies at the mercy of the farmer. Every day's work so done is abstracted from the fund of labour, and is a direct robbery, because it is an artificial one, upon the only property that the labourer enjoys. The farmer, too, has a direct interest in the augmentation of this evil ; as *that* increases, the wages he pays diminish, and he escapes the consequent rise in the poor-rates in a great measure, by dividing with the other classes that contribute to them, the burden of this factitious excess. Every fresh labourer that applies to the overseer, becomes a *bonus* to the farmer to throw out of employ a steady workman that he may replace him at a cheaper rate, till a very small excess in the number of labourers beyond the effective demand, will rapidly pauperise a whole population.

It is to be remarked, that there are two parties to this state of things—the pauper and the occupier ; and it is by observing the object of either, that we shall best arrive at the probable means of correcting the evil.

The pauper imagines that he shall obtain from the parish easier work, uncontrolled, choosing his own hours, generally in company with his usual associates, and which, *without interfering with his ordinary habits*, he may take or reject at pleasure. It is work that he takes under the plea of necessity, that is received without any kindly feeling—as a matter of right—and is thrown up at *his* option, with a degree of credit of thereby removing a burden from the parish, which they were otherwise legally bound to sustain.

The occupier sees in this system the indefinite reduction in the rate of wages, and in the rise in the rates (part only of which he is called upon to pay,) a powerful engine for the reduction of rents. It must, moreover, be borne in mind, that in agricultural parishes the overseers of the poor are generally selected from the class of the farmer, and the vestry is almost entirely composed of them.

It is clear, that the reinstating the supply and demand in the market for labour in their just proportions is the *only* remedy for this evil; for while it destroys the plea of the pauper for applying to the parish for work, it would equally be destructive of the chance of the farmer of obtaining parish hands at a cheap rate. Now this must be done (if an increasing fund of work cannot be found to

meet the excess of labourers) by diminishing the number of labourers in proportion to the work required; that is to say, the number of those who are fairly in the market for labour.

Before I go more particularly into the nature of the provision that I should feel inclined to suggest, I must observe that I can conceive no system of parochial management of sufficient general efficacy, that is not *self-acting*. To be effective, it must depend only on itself, and not on the benevolence, activity, or caprice of individuals; and, presuming it to be good, it should be left uncontrolled and uncontrollable by any party whatever in a parish.

The next point that I wish to assume, is, that it is only the *necessity* of the case that gives a claim to the pauper of maintenance at the public expense; and if that necessity can by any fair means be obviated, and the pauper be furnished with those means by the public, that they have fulfilled their duty to him.

Now the provision is this—and it is very nearly a return to the old law—that no relief whatever should be given to any *able-bodied* labourer for himself or any of his family (not being ailing) *out of the workhouse*. As this provision might operate with a degree of hardship towards many present paupers, I would suggest that it should apply only to such as have *been born since*

*the year 1800.** This would also gradually introduce the practice, and materially facilitate its execution, as to the enlarging of workhouses, &c. and which, if introduced at once, might be occasionally inconvenient.

The persons so maintained in any public work-house should not, under any pretence whatever, be employed on any private work, or to the advantage of any private individual whatever, whether in the parish or out of it.

The effect of this enactment would be, at once to ascertain the real and *bond fide* amount of surplus labour in the kingdom, of which, from the great frauds now practised, I apprehend we have no adequate judgment. I suspect the amount to be much less than is generally supposed; at the same time I believe that a very small excess operates infinitely beyond the proportion of its amount, as compared with the whole number of labourers.

The next effect that would be gained, would be to compel every farmer to hire his labourers without reference to any parish hands, which would be thereby abolished, and consequently he must hire them at the market price.

With respect to that part of the question,

* With respect to those paupers born before 1800, I would apply to them the provisions of Mr. Slaney's Bill, hereafter alluded to. The only difference being, that they would not be compelled to come into the house.

whether families of more than a certain number should be excepted out of such an enactment, I certainly feel that there is some difficulty. It is clear that where there is a *bond fide* surplus population, and consequently that the pressure must fall somewhere, if the man with a large family be excepted, then by obtaining work himself, he displaces some other labourer with less family, or perhaps even a single man. In this there can be no good policy. But a case might and would frequently arise where there is no excess of labourers, and where his work would be actually wanted without displacing that of any other labourer, and yet the rate of wages he could obtain might be insufficient to maintain a very large and young family. I speak with great hesitation, but I incline to think that the petty sessions, after examining the overseers upon oath, if they are satisfied that there is no surplus labour in the parish, and that their order will not affect any other labourer therein, and if they judge it expedient, might, in cases of families of more than four children under twelve years of age, direct the excess, or part of it, to be relieved *in the workhouse*. Where the workhouse is sufficiently near, they might also permit the child to return to its parents at night.

To shew that the plan I suggest is not merely theoretical, I beg to state that at the request of a large parish in this neighbourhood (the present

population of which is above 2700), I engaged to attend the vestries there from Lady-day 1826, and did so constantly for two years. In a very short time the whole management of the parish was abandoned to me, and I adopted, as nearly as I was able, the above plan. I employed the surplus labourers entirely on parish work, allowing no individual to make any advantage whatever of them, and their numbers were immediately reduced from considerably above a hundred to about forty. I also gave no relief out of the workhouse, unless a man had more than one young child. I speak, of course, of able-bodied labourers. The amount of rates levied in the parish the four preceding years was as under :—

	£.	s.	d.
Year ending Lady-day 1823	5058	3	0
— 1824	5441	5	3
— 1825	4602	2	0
— 1826	4480	11	3

Besides the rates thus levied, a debt of above £500 was left by the outgoing officers at Lady-day 1826. That debt was paid off in the two years in which the parish was under this management, and no fresh one incurred ; and besides that, an addition was made to the workhouse, causing an expenditure of above £100. The rates in those two years were :—

	£.	s.	d.
Year ending Lady-day 1827	4123	8	5
— 1828	3064	7	4

Since I have given up the management, the rates have been respectively :—

		£.	s.	d.
Year ending Lady-day 1829	.....	3651	7	9½
—	1830	.....	3178	17 4½
—	1831	.....	4262	3 11½
—	1832	.....	4049	5 5½

In the last two years the system of billeting the men has been resumed.

I shall here remark, that under the present system of poor-laws, their administration is entirely in the hands of the occupiers of the soil. I think it would be attended with beneficial effect, if landlords were to have votes co-extensive with the votes of their tenants, not exceeding in any individual case a certain proportion, say one-fifth, of the votes of the whole parish; and more especially that they should be allowed to exercise those votes by proxy.

The opinions here expressed were formed, and indeed acted upon in some measure, before the Report made by Mr. Slaney's committee in 1828, but are amply borne out in that very valuable document. To that I beg to refer for a fuller exposition of the advantages that might be reasonably expected from the working of this system.

Upon this branch, therefore, of the subject I shall not enlarge, but will proceed to the second, and in my opinion more important one. No relief being allowed to able-bodied labourers out of the

house, and no labourer so becoming an inmate of the house being allowed to work on any private account, those who are so maintained will necessarily be *bonâ fide* surplus labourers. Now my proposition is this, that for every 365 days* that any able-bodied labourer or labourers shall be maintained in any public workhouse in the course of one year, any one labourer (being willing) whether in the house or out of it, shall be allowed, and shall *claim*, the expenses of emigrating from his parish;—my position turns upon this point, that a man who is able to work and willing to work, but for whom his parish can find no work, shall claim at the hands of that parish, the means of finding work elsewhere.

The order for such means should be made, on the application of the pauper, by the magistrates at petty sessions, and the amount, if it exceeded in any one year a shilling rate, should be borrowed on the mortgage of the poor-rates, to be repaid in four years. The justice, and policy even in an economical point of view, of such a proceeding, are so clearly shewn in the examination of

* One man remaining in the workhouse unemployed for twelve months, or twelve men for one month, would shew that there was a deficiency in the demand for work equal to that of one workman for a whole year, and consequently that there was, *quoad hoc*, one surplus labourer. This check upon the claim of the paupers would effectually prevent their availing themselves of it injuriously to the parish.

Mr. Law Hodges, in the committee of last year before the Lords (p. 14 *et seq.*), that I shall merely refer to that for the grounds of my opinion.

Though I would only give a *claim* to the pauper under the limitations above proposed, yet I would allow the overseers, under any circumstances, with the consent (of two-thirds) of the parish, and also of the magistrates, to allow such charges, not exceeding a one shilling rate, to willing emigrants.

The effect of this system would be, that by the first part of it you would relieve the market for labour of the increase of the present redundant hands, you would ascertain the actual amount of that redundancy, you would put an end to the frauds that are now equally practised by the pauper and rate-payer, and you would establish a system that would work of itself.

By the second, you would neutralise the hardship of compelling a willing workman to accept the house, by offering the means to him of procuring an honest and independent maintenance for himself elsewhere; you would remove into profitable employment, at a cheaper rate than you can maintain them here in idleness, those who are a burden and a nuisance to you; and you would for ever prevent their families from indefinitely increasing upon you beyond the possibility of support; in short, it must be remembered, in the words of Mr. Slaney, that

“the difficulty to be surmounted is not *how* to furnish employment for a given number of pauper workmen, but *so* to furnish it as that that number may not be multiplied on our hands, and thus augment our difficulties in every succeeding year.”

In offering the foregoing observations, I have not been sanguine enough not to be aware of having to encounter many difficulties. Had any plan yet offered itself free from objection, it would have been instantly adopted, and already in operation. None such has been yet presented; and in investigating this or any other proposition, the balance must be struck upon the comparison of the evils that at present exist, and those that might probably be anticipated from the alteration. Thus much at least I may say for my suggestion: the last returns of the amount of poor-rates that were made to parliament prior to 1795, (*viz.* in 1785,) gave two millions as the then annual expenditure; in 1795, the power was given, for the first time, to order relief out of the house; in 1803, the rates were 4,000,000*l.*; in 1813, 6,000,000*l.*; and they have continued at that amount, with little or no variation, to the present time. I state the facts, and I leave it to others to investigate how far the rise in the rates was the effect of, or merely coincident with, the alteration of the law.

The objections I anticipate to the first part of my plan are chiefly three—the expense, the difficulty of providing work, and the moral contamination.

That the system here proposed would occasion an expense, unjustifiable from the hopelessness of its ultimate liquidation, or from the magnitude of its immediate pressure, is a postulate that I am by no means prepared to concede. At all events, it is a question not of opinion but of fact. A return of all parishes not having any workhouse, or of such as would have only insufficient ones, might be easily obtained along with the returns of the poor-rates made annually to parliament. Should it appear that a larger sum than the respective parishes could defray would be required for the purpose, in the first instance it should be advanced by the nation. It must be borne in mind that this is not an individual question,—it is not a mere question of the continuance or the increase of poor-rate,—“but the evil involves in it the depression and degradation of a numerous and valuable class, who have the strongest title to the protection of the legislature.” The system, however, as here proposed, would come into operation very gradually. In the first instance, parishes would put out the old and infirm inmates of their houses to board with their families or friends, so as to make room for their able-bodied labourers; very small parishes might be incorporated; and if, from peculiar circumstances, such an enactment should be inapplicable in any given instance, the Court of Quarter Sessions might suspend the operation of it from time to time.

As to the second point, the difficulty of finding employment, I reply that *it exists already*. Whether the applicants for relief reside in their own homes or in the parish workhouse, the overseer is equally bound "to set them on work;" and as the disinclination to come into the house would diminish the number of claimants, so would the difficulty of the overseer diminish in proportion. I do not deny the difficulty, but it is not created—it is rather alleviated by this system.

As to moral contamination, I think the objection more theoretical than practical. The workhouse I contemplate should be most strictly regulated by a most rigid enactment. It should comprise classification, a dietary at any rate not better than that of the independent labourer, hours of work, moral instruction, &c. In short, without the stigma, it should embrace the discipline, of a prison. It should be enforced, upon the oath of the overseers, with the heaviest penalties for evasion. It should be *uniform*, that there might be no preference on the part of paupers for particular parishes. It should on no account be farmed, and the assistant-overseer should be the governor of it. If it were desirable, these workhouses might be established for large districts of a county, and be entirely under the control of the Quarter Sessions, or the district magistrates. *In fact, the primary object is to make relief most difficult and undesirable, but not impos-*

sible of attainment. There must be no valid excuse for being driven by distress into necessary crime. Under this discipline, coupled with the power of emigration, I cannot conceive the workhouses to become over-crowded. "The advantages (says Becher) resulting from a workhouse, must arise, not from keeping the poor in the house, but from keeping them out of it; by constraining the inferior classes to know and feel how demoralising and degrading is the compulsory relief drawn from the parish, to silence the clamour and satisfy the cravings of wilful and woful indigence; but how sweet and wholesome is the food, and how honourable is that independence, which is earned by persevering and honest industry."

The Rev. G. Wells says (Lords' Report, 1830, p. 148), "That in consequence of being liable to be sent to the workhouse, the poor are content to be put to harder shifts; they will bear more pressure rather than take the alternative of sending their children or going themselves." In answer to the question, "Do you consider that the practice of that poor-house demoralises the people?" he says, "under the present master *it does not.*" Mr. Slaney says (p. 197, *ibid.*) "that workhouses are very unpopular—that instances of deserving labourers being subject to hardships in consequence of the treatment they receive in workhouses, are infrequent; but he believes that the difficulty that the poor have of going into these

houses is beneficial to them in the mass—that it stimulates them to exertion—that they labour much harder, and are much more unwilling to apply in the parishes where a workhouse exists, than in the parishes where it does not.”

The Rev. T. Whateley says (*ibid.* p. 239), “The workhouse is very beneficial, for we find very few of the poor like to come into the workhouse, who would try every trick to get a weekly allowance in money.”

Mr. Parkinson says (*ibid.* p. 320), “Since the establishing that excellent institution, the incorporated poor-house at Upton, a much better system of management has prevailed, and which has produced the most beneficial effects, for the labouring classes have never been more industrious and contented than they are at the present time, and all are in full employment, and at good wages.”

The Rev. J. Faithful (*ibid.* p. 338) says, “The condition of receiving relief for the number of family, where it apparently exceeded the means of support, being in the poor-house, by sending the excess there, that there was no instance of any labourers with large families who had done so—widows had; *that in consequence of that regulation, the permanent relief in the parish of Hatfield had been reduced from 1100*l.* to below 300*l.**; that there was no difficulty in rendering the workhouse sufficient for the purpose; and that the same system

might be generally introduced very well; that it would be no objection in small parishes where they unite; that Hatfield itself was decidedly a country parish, containing 14,000 acres, with a population of 3216 in 1821; that the distribution of the lodging rooms in the workhouse had been assimilated in some respects to that of barracks, by which much room had been gained; and the house is divided into men's rooms, women's rooms, children's rooms, and rooms for the sick, and also into day-rooms."

We have already two descriptions of masses of individuals brought together under one roof, with which we may contrast a workhouse under the discipline here advocated. A manufactory is dissolute from want of discipline, though the character of its inmates may be *legally* uncontaminated. A prison, though its discipline may be perfect, is still contaminated in the character of its inmates. The workhouse I propose, joins the discipline of a prison to the incontamination of a manufactory—it is, in short, a barrack; and in fact, if strictly acted upon, I am strongly convinced would ultimately become available more *in terrorem* than from being called into ordinary operation.

The Bill brought in by Mr. Slaney, the chairman of the committee of the House of Commons in 1828, that framed the very able report then presented, proceeded upon the same principles upon which I have argued, but stopped just short

of the end to which they should have conducted it. The Bill declared it unlawful for any overseer to make any allowance whatever in addition to his wages, to any labourer while he was in employment. It allowed, however, the overseer to employ any labourer *wholly* on account of the parish, and to pay him such sums or parochial allowance as would support him and his family. Now this enactment appears to me to fail in this respect,—at present, any pauper, in the strict sense of the word (I mean one who receives regular parochial assistance), is presumed to exist upon a minimum. The bare sum that is necessary beyond his wages for the support of himself and his family, is all that he can claim of his parish; and of course it is immaterial to him whether this minimum is derived from his master, from his parish, or from both—he still obtains it, and obtains it only. Now it appears to me, that if the pauper find that these part allowances are to be stopped, instead of working harder to obtain the extra wages necessary, or living poorer (if indeed he can), to support the additional family so returned upon him, he will throw himself at once entirely upon the parish. Parish work is notoriously easy, from the difficulty of superintendence. If then it is offered so as to afford the same pecuniary advantages as regular employment, it will become a premium instead of a penalty for want of exertion. But if offered only in the workhouse, the question

is entirely altered—the pauper's household is then broken up—his habits are violated—his liberty in some measure constrained—it is no longer a premium, it is only not a penalty, because with the power of emigration it is voluntary. Neither would the system effect the contemplated rise in wages, not at least if money allowances were permitted even when the work was done solely for the parish. For the pauper would work during the summer at the present rate of wages, but he would be minus the present allowances. When the winter came he would be thrown upon the parish, involved in debt, and in arrears of rent; and the officers, rather than suffer a distress upon him, which would put them to the partial inconvenience of taking him into the house, would increase his allowance while he was a total parish pauper, to meet the incumbrances incurred while he worked at inferior wages. I do not speak theoretically, I have known the fact. Under the workhouse system, this would be impossible. Still, however, I should rejoice to see that Bill carried, for it would at any rate be the first step to the entire measure. The disadvantage of the present system, and the advantages of that proposed in the above Bill, and which would apply still more forcibly to my suggestion, are so ably stated in that Report, that I should hardly feel myself justified in not transcribing them. Speaking of fixed allowances for children, it says, “A

surplus population is encouraged ; men who receive but a small pittance know that they have only to marry, and that pittance will be augmented in proportion to the number of their children ; hence the supply of labour is by no means regulated by the demand, and parishes are burdened with thirty, forty, or fifty labourers, for whom they can find no employment, and who serve to depress the condition of all their fellow-labourers in the same parish. An intelligent witness, who was much in the habit of employing labourers, states, that when complaining of their allowance, they frequently say to him, we will marry and you must maintain us. *By far the worst consequences of the system is the degradation of the character of the labouring class.* * * * The consequence of this redundancy of labour is, that the wages are very low, as the labourers exceeding in number the demand for their services undersell each other in the market for employment, and being underpaid become degraded, go to the parish rate as a matter of course, and lose the hope of improving their condition by their own efforts. As, then, it appears to your Committee that the actual redundancy of labour is the principal source of the low wages and misery of the peasantry, it seems of consequence to consider whether that redundancy is kept up by any thing in the practices alluded to ; because, if that is the case, it will follow, *that low wages give rise to the practice of allowances, and the*

system of allowances re-acts to keep the wages low ; so that, without some change in that which is alternately cause and effect, the evil may be continued in a vicious circle almost without limit.

“ The demand and supply of labour have, in the natural course of things, such a tendency to regulate and balance each other (unless counteracted by artificial institutions), that any excess of either arising from temporary causes, would, if met by temporary expedients alone, in no long time correct itself.

“ As it appears evident, that in every country the increase and supply of workmen depend chiefly on the period at which marriages are contracted, it will be material to inquire, how far the *particular mode* of granting parish relief, described ‘ allowance for children,’ has a tendency to hasten such marriages before the time at which they would otherwise take place. The principal check to improvident marriages among the poorer classes (in the natural course of things) appears to be, the knowledge that the consequence of such a marriage must be the loss of some comfort they before enjoyed ; that the wages which amply supported a single person must be divided amongst many ; and that such a person when married must work harder and be worse fed than before. A single man can afford many humble luxuries, which with a family he must give up ; he can indulge himself with an occasional holyday, and has a trifle to spend

at a neighbouring fair; and these enjoyments he must relinquish, if he contracts marriage without the means of supporting his children. These motives will operate more or less, according to the intelligence and forethought of the people. This broad difference between the situation of a single man and one who marries improvidently, it seems of the utmost consequence to preserve: it rests upon the laws of nature, and its effects are most beneficial to the real and permanent happiness of the working classes, as being the only effectual means of keeping wages good. The practice in question, however, of making up the wages of workmen from the poor-rate, according to an invariable scale of allowance depending upon the number of a man's family, tends directly to counteract this difference, and to equalise the condition of a married and single man, as it at the same time puts upon one level the idle and industrious workman. The carelessness to the consequences of their own acts which is generated in the minds of the poor by this pernicious practice, is not only in proportion to what they actually receive from the parish, but to what they expect to receive, which is often magnified in their sanguine minds. Such seems to be the *direct* effect of the practice adverted to, but an indirect effect is produced from the same cause, which increases and perpetuates the evil.

“It appears to your Committee, from evidence adduced before them, that wherever this practice

prevails 'of making up from the rate the wages of a married man, to what is supposed enough to maintain him and his family according to the fixed scale,' the farmers and rate-payers (for the purpose of diminishing the allowance which would be paid him) are in the almost constant habit of giving the man with a family the preference in employment; reserving for him any job-work, and rejecting the application of single men, who are thus often thrown upon parish employment at low wages, whilst the married man receives more from the farmer, besides an allowance from the parish in proportion to his family. Thus the single labourer not only is *no better off*, but is in a *worse situation than the married man*.* Such a system

* *Extract from "An Appeal to the Justice of his Judges and his Country, by an Agricultural Labourer, on his Trial at Salisbury for Machine-breaking."* — *From the Morning Chronicle*:—

"But I am told I am indebted to the benevolence of the law for a provision against want. My Lords, it is the mode in which this benevolent law is administered by the legal authorities, that has brought me into the unhappy position in which I now stand. I am unmarried; and for this reason alone, during nearly one-half the year, I am refused all employment by the farmers of my neighbourhood. They prefer the men with large families, because, as they truly say, they *must* keep *them*, and whatever wages they pay them go to save the poor-rate; whereas, if they employed me, the same wages would be far more than I can claim from that rate, and, by not doing so, they save that difference.

"My Lords,—I humbly beg to represent that the difference

is followed by its natural effects; and witnesses state, that where this practice prevails, though there is at the time a superabundance of workmen, and the wages are very low, that the labourers almost invariably marry very early, (often between eighteen and twenty-two years of age,) and come to the parish, as a matter of course, to maintain their children.

“ It appears then to your Committee, that this practice has a strong tendency to lead to improvident marriages, thus to keep up a redundancy of labourers, and depress artificially the natural rate of wages. Your Committee therefore recommend, that the continuance of so mischievous a system may be prevented. * * *

“ In reverting to the consideration of a remedy for it, it has been observed, ‘ that these practices

which they save, as employers and rate-payers, I lose. I am prevented, through no fault of my own, but solely through my being unburdened with a family, from earning fair wages in an industrious employment, and driven to apply to the overseer to save me from starvation. The overseer sends me to work for those very farmers who refused to employ me voluntarily—to work on their farms, and for their profit, at a rate of pay of sixpence a day. My natural sense of justice revolts at being required to do the same work for sixpence, for which other and weaker men than myself, working by my side, receive two shillings, because they have a wife and family. The overseer takes me before a magistrate for not doing as much work as the man who receives four times as much pay as myself, and the magistrate commits me to gaol. * * *

may be prevented under the present laws ;' and several instances have been stated where this is the case. It appears, however, to your Committee, not enough that these abuses *may* be, but that they *should* be prevented. If the evil arising from their continuance was only the increase of Poor-rate, the question might be different ; but they at the same time involve the depression and degradation of a numerous and valuable class, who have the strongest right to the protection of the legislature."

The Report then proceeds to detail the provisions of the Bill above alluded to, and to trace its probable consequences.

" Under the proposed law, no healthy able-bodied man in employment would have any allowance for his children ; the effect of which would be, that, *in the first instance*, several of those with large families might probably come upon the parish altogether, instead of being partially supported from it as at present ; but these being taken out of the market for labour, the wages of all the rest would rise, until they reached that point at which it would answer to the masters to pay. At this point it is evident that all the single men, and all those with small families, would be first employed in constant work, and at secure wages ; and, in addition to these, such of the men with large families as were the best workmen, or whom, as trusty men, their employers wished to retain.

The rest of those who had very large families would remain as workmen employed by the parish (their children employed and maintained by the parish also) till they were enabled, either by their own efforts, or their children being grown up, to betake themselves to the ordinary work of the neighbourhood. As all the workmen, both single and married, who remained independent of parish assistance, would see, that by accepting it, they must become parish workmen, and be controlled by overseers, they would, it is probable, use the utmost exertion of their industry and care to avoid being obliged to have recourse to such an expedient. In this effort (if they were deserving) they would be aided by the assistance and sympathy of their employer, who would be sorry to lose a faithful and meritorious workman. Without any such assistance, however, these men would be much aided in their struggles to keep their independence, by the rise in wages which would have taken place; as it appears to your Committee, that in many places the plan of paying part of the wages from the rates has depressed the natural rate of wages. The employer pretended not to be in want of a workman, and knowing that, under the practice which prevailed, such workman would (with the parish allowance) take whatever was offered him, kept back the demand, till the rate of wages fell to his own terms. Such a practice is clearly liable to the most gross abuses, and the

employers, where it prevails, have a strong temptation to pay a great part of their men's wages out of the pockets of the rate-payers. * * * *

“ In case the recommendation of your Committee was acted upon, they beg to state, that the number of labourers thrown upon parish employment, would, in their opinion, be much smaller than is often supposed, because, under the allowance system, few care to exert themselves diligently to seek fresh channels of employment. It would, however, be necessary for overseers, in the first instance, to provide, beforehand, parochial employment (by contract or otherwise) at whatever loss, and to adhere steadily to the plan of exacting a full measure of *real* work from all applicants; in which case it is probable that the number would soon diminish. Considerable difficulty would perhaps attend the commencement of the suggested alteration, but it seems worth while to make some temporary sacrifices for the sake of returning to a better system of relief. Hitherto, your Committee have been looking only at the *immediate* effect of the proposed law, which would be to give to the poor the advantage of the whole *real demand* for their services, and would directly improve the situation of those men who did *not* depend on the parish, by giving to every man his pay, according to the work performed by him. In looking, however, to the ultimate effect of such a law, your Committee cannot but anticipate the

best permanent results to the poor. It will be evident that, under this law, as a single man will be well paid and well off, so will he see the natural consequence of an improvident marriage distinctly brought before him in the different condition of the parish workman, which he can compare with his own. If, therefore, he is at all regardful of his own comfort, or that of her whom he wishes to make his wife, (who must share his fate, whatever it be,) he will wait for marriage till he has sufficient, with the wages he can earn, to maintain a family. Should the independent workman be thus induced to delay his marriage for *a short time*, the supply of labour being thence *a little slower*, wages will gradually rise to the amount sufficient to support a family in comfort; and in such case the poor-rates will fall as the wages rise. Your Committee do not venture to anticipate that such results would, in all cases, follow from the alteration thus recommended; but they incline to think that, on a general view of its consequences, considerable and permanent improvement might be expected. * * *

“ One objection will probably be made to the difficulty of furnishing parish employment to the additional numbers who will be forced upon it. Your Committee cannot but think that exaggerated fears are entertained on this head, as, under the proposed law, they conceive better wages will be paid than before; and as the total cost of the

working classes is paid by wages and poor-rate, the poor-rate must, in the whole, be eventually diminished by the change; in addition to which advantage, will be the improved tone and spirit of the workmen, resting on their own efforts, and aided alone in illness, infirmity, or old age. * * *

“ Your Committee have, however, great pleasure in being able to turn, in support of their reasoning, to practical examples of the benefit derived from the regulations they recommend: these have been found highly advantageous in the populous parishes of Liverpool and Bethnal Green, where they have been strictly adhered to; and the consequences are detailed in the evidence of Mr. Hale and Mr. Ellis, annexed to this Report.

“ With regard to its practicability in country parishes, your Committee can state that it is, and always has been, acted upon in the north of England, where the condition of the peasantry is universally allowed to be the best. Wherever adopted and *persevered in* elsewhere, it has been found beneficial, though the difficulty of such a task is very great when these abuses prevail in a neighbouring parish, *which would be obviated by a general law on the subject.*

“ Should it be deemed expedient to follow the recommendation of your Committee, they beg to state that the success of such a measure would depend, in many cases, *on the adoption of a well-regulated system of workhouse industry*, where a

full measure of labour may be constantly exacted, proportionate to the ability of each individual, and where such proper restrictions may be observed as experience proves to be necessary."

Such are the principal observations of that most valuable Report, which I trust will be candidly received and seriously considered. If, by these pages, their important truths shall have secured the attention of but a few reflecting individuals, my purpose will have been amply answered.

I proceed now to the objection to the second part of my plan. I believe this may be summed up in the following passage of the "Quarterly Review," vol. xli. p. 267. "But what is the remedy? 'Mortgage the poor-rates, and raise funds to remove this excess to Canada.' This might, perhaps, answer for a very few years; but the vacuum, we fear, would soon be filled up; the number removed would be replaced, and at no distant period, a second removal, and, consequently, a second mortgage, would become necessary. This succession of removals and mortgages would require, we fear, to be repeated, until at last no surplus revenue would remain to mortgage; the rent of the land would thus be annihilated. 'Check the increase of population,'—as well might an attempt be made to stop the current of the Thames; the puny efforts of man can do but little to counteract the effects of one of the

strongest and most powerful of nature's laws." It might, perhaps, be sufficient to answer the writer in the words of the same work, when reviewing the Emigration Report, vol. xxxvii. p. 576, "The Committee recommend a pecuniary advance, in the nature of a loan, for the purpose of facilitating a regulated system of emigration upon this principle. They remark, that the English witnesses concur as to the expediency of raising a fund, upon the security of the poor-rates, towards the expense of removing paupers by emigration; and they quote the opinion of Mr. Malthus, that 'parishes would act prudently as regards their interest, in charging their poor-rates for this purpose, and that even a national tax would be justifiable for it, if a bare probability existed of the vacuum not being filled up.' *But when a patient is suffering from plethora, and in danger of apoplexy, where is the medical practitioner who would be withheld from bleeding him, because nature may again, in a short time, surcharge the vessels which have been thus relieved?* A regular, as well as a regulated, system of emigration is required in the stage of society we have attained; it becomes as necessary in the economy of a state, as of an ant-hill or a bee-hive."

I shall, however, examine the question a little closer. We are told—

——— "there is something remarkably grand,
In the sound of hard words that we don't understand."

The picture of mortgages — successions of removal and mortgages — the ultimate annihilation of rent — are phantoms sufficient to scare, in these times, any agriculturist, even from consideration of the subject. First of all, then, I will ask whether you have not already a constantly increasing mortgage on your land? increasing as the population increases, and rapidly bringing us to that very point at which rent will be annihilated? Shall I again quote the “Quarterly?” The very preceding passage to the one I am examining, is as follows, — “That the population of parishes alleged to have a superabundant body of labourers will continue to increase, admits of no doubt; and if the number of hands absorbed by tillage does not increase in an equal ratio, the proportion of idle hands will become greater, and the pressure upon the rates heavier, until, at length, the whole surplus produce of each parish will be but barely sufficient to maintain the unemployed paupers. An agrarian law will thus become virtually established, and the labouring classes will take possession of the land, from which they are now excluded.”

Let us, however, get rid of this fearful array of mortgages, and put the proposition in a different form; we will put it thus: given, the present amount of surplus labourers and the cost of maintaining them; required, a plan by which that expense shall, for the next four years, be dimi-

nished by one-half, and at the end of that time totally determine, and the surplus labourers be removed.* I say that the solution may be arrived at, and that too in the way I have pointed out. I rejoice in being able to confirm my view of the subject by the very clear evidence of Mr. Law Hodges (Lords' Report, 1831, p. 14). He says, "I found the parish (Benenden) burdened with a number of persons who could not get employment at any part of the year; and when the autumn came, and throughout the winter, there were from thirty to eighty persons out of work in the parish in which I live. I considered that was an intolerable evil. I was very desirous of knowing whether the Government intended to adopt any mode of national emigration; and finding that it was not likely to be the case, and finding, also, that the continuance of such a body of unemployed persons would, at no very distant day, consume all the produce of the parish,—that then there would be nothing left for rent, or tithe, or any thing else,—it appeared to me that an immediate remedy was necessary to relieve the parish of that

* Suppose the vacuum so created again to fill up. It would at least take twenty years, and in the mean time the nation will have saved half the annual expense above alluded to, for four years, and the whole for sixteen years; the measure must then be repeated. But, I conceive that under the regulations here proposed, population would not increase so rapidly as it has done under the allowance system.

burden, and in the course of two years 149 persons emigrated to America—men, women, and children; and in consequence of that, we have now comparatively but few persons out of work, and our poor-rates have materially decreased. The parish contained 1746 inhabitants at the time of the census of 1821” (it now contains 1663). “As soon as that measure was agreed to, I offered to the parish to advance all the money; this, of course, did away with the difficulties on the part of the farmers, who would have been distressed to have provided it; and they all concurred in assuring me, that the money should be repaid by regular instalments, and that they would also pay me 4 per cent interest for the money until paid off. The cost was 1197*l.* 4*s.* 3*d.* and the sum we agreed for repayment was at the rate of one shilling per head per week, which we consider was less than they would have cost the parish if they had remained with us.

BENENDEN EMIGRATION ACCOUNT.—COUNTY OF KENT.

Years ending Lady-day.	Number of persons who emigrated.			Average cost per head.		Total amount of expenses. The money borrowed.		Sums repaid on account, to liquidate the debt.		Annual expenditure, including emigration expenses.		Annual expenditure, exclusive of emigration expenses.	
	Men.	Women.	Children.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.
1825	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2975	19 6	..	..
1826	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2962	5 8	..	..
1827	29	10	19	9 4	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	534	19 10	85	3 6	2300	7 5	2215	3 11
1828	25	22	40	7 2	1	621	17 4	212	6 6	2497	15 9	2285	9 3
1829	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	317	2 0	2325	12 11	2008	10 11
1830	2	2	0	10 1	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	40	7 1	251	11 0	2184	11 3	1933	0 3
	56	34	59			1197	4 3	866	3 0				
	Men.....56												
	Women.....34												
	Children under 14 years } 59												
	Total..149												

The assessed rental of the parish of Benenden is £3,200.

“ The sum repaid in the year ending Lady-day 1830, should have been £335. 8s. but in consequence of the great difficulty experienced by the overseers in collecting the rates, owing to the severe losses sustained by the occupiers from the blight in hops and corn, the rot in sheep, &c. in 1829, the rate of repayment during the six winter months was reduced from 1s. to 6d. per head per week. *It is now generally admitted, even by those who at first opposed the measure of emigration, that the parties emigrating would have cost the parish more than 1s. per week if they had remained at home, independently of the increase in the numbers of parishioners which might be expected to take place from so many young couples.* * * * * During a great portion of the years 1825-26, there were from seventy to ninety able-bodied men on the parish-books for want of employ. Since fifty-six of them have emigrated, it is a rare circumstance to have any out of work, except in severe weather, which is a convincing proof that *ten surplus hands will generally create fifteen.*

“ The greater part of the land in Benenden is occupied by tenants at will; and notwithstanding the heavy expenses which have been incurred by the emigration system, the foregoing figures shew that all the rate-payers in the parish will be very considerable gainers, even if they quit their respective occupations immediately the whole debt

is discharged, or if they had quitted at any period since 1827.*

“As soon as we had settled amongst ourselves the mode in which the money should be advanced and repaid, the next point was to propose it to the men; and I think I may say that nearly the whole population volunteered instantly to such an extent, that it appeared practicable and easy to comprehend in the number of emigrants every labourer of indifferent character in the parish. To this proposition I instantly and decidedly objected; observing, that if this is to be a benefit to the men, the good man has a better right to it than the bad character, and my impression was (having remarked this parish for very nearly eight and forty years, and for a great many years of that period we had not what I call bad characters), that *if the number of workmen in the parish were reduced down to such an amount as to balance the demand and supply, those called bad characters, by having plenty of work, would become*

* I hope this part of Mr. Hodge's evidence will be attentively perused by those who are opposed to emigration on the score of expense. I see no objection to charging half of the cost upon the landlords; but the above evidence shews that there is no injustice, in fact, a great gain, even though the whole should be charged upon the occupier. It would be rather unfair upon those landlords who had let their land upon lease; but it would make the measure more popular, and they would certainly eventually gain much by it.

*as good as any other ; and I am very happy to say that has turned out to be the fact generally. * * **

Since I have had recourse to the emigration system, the morals of my parish have improved ; and I prove that in this way : before that took place, petty thefts, and even very considerable ones, were constantly taking place ; since that time they have been very rare. No other parish in my neighbourhood has followed my example, though they are all desirous of it ; but the difficulties are so great that they have not been able to accomplish it. One of the great difficulties arises, not from the unwillingness of the parties to go, but from the great hazard that attends the advance of money ; for, as your lordships know, it is an illegal measure altogether, and there is no sort of security for the repayment of the money beyond that of a good feeling of those benefited by it, viz. the rate-payers. Any person objecting to that employment of the poor-rates would prevent it, and the person would lose all his money. But in my parish, any farmer quitting the parish at any one year after the emigration began, would have been a gainer, because the rates were falling all the time."

I shall here rest my case ; I have pointed out the grounds upon which I have formed my opinion—I have given the evidence of facts from which others may judge for themselves. The plan I propose has at least this merit,—it is

founded upon experience and not upon theory—it is a retrogression, and, I hope, not an incautious one, to the state of the law in its earlier and purer period—and it is one which, should it fail in its working, may be at once abandoned and without prejudice. Should it be applicable to one part of the country and not to another, let that part to which it is applicable have the benefit of it. But there is nothing in it that I can conjecture that is not of general application. Its main provisions have been acted upon at Liverpool and Bethnal Green, at Southwell, Upton, and Hatfield. Should it require modifying according to individual localities, let that be the province of the respective Courts of Sessions, and not interfere with the general principle. Should it succeed, we may still hope to see England once again what she was when Daniel sung of her :—

“ The fairest land, that from her thrusts the rest,
As though she cared not for the world beside,
A world within herself, with wonders blest.”

COTTAGE RENTS PAID BY PARISHES.

The following resolutions on the advantages of the abolition of parish rents were moved by me and passed in 1826, in a parish in this neighbourhood:—

“ 1st, That it will greatly simplify the parish accounts.

“ 2dly, That it will check the speculation in pauper cottages, which at present is encouraged by the certainty of rental which is now guaranteed by the parish allowances.

“ 3dly, That it will cause the owners of pauper tenements to place their own labourers in them, rather than persons over whom they have no control beyond that of landlord.

“ 4thly, That, consequently, it will strengthen the connexion between the employer and his labourer, and tend to establish a more orderly and moral population.

“ 5thly, That from the increased difficulty in procuring tenements, early marriages among paupers will, in some measure, be checked, and the increase of pauperism proportionally prevented.

“ 6thly, That by compelling paupers to lay by a certain sum against their rent-day *out of their earnings*, a habit of prudence and forethought will be created, which will be of the highest moral

advantage to them, and eventually of most effectual benefit to the parish.

“ 7thly, That as under the present system it is more advantageous to let a tenement to a recognised pauper than to an independent labourer, the abolition of guaranteed rents will, on the contrary, give to that labourer the preference as tenant, who has shewn the greatest industry in supporting his family without any, or, at any rate, with the least parochial assistance.

“ 8thly, That as pauper families will become objectionable in proportion to their size, and their consequent inability to pay rents for large tenements, it will become an object with the father to reduce the number of his family as much as possible, by getting his children out to service at an early age.”

LABOUR-RATES.

In these observations I shall say nothing of the practical absurdity of undertaking to provide, under all circumstances, an indefinite quantity of work for an indefinite number of claimants ; but I shall confine myself to what I apprehend would be the immediate effects.

Labour-rates may be made either for employing the surplus labourers only, or all the labourers of a parish, for a half or a whole year. Suppose it for

the *surplus* labourers only. Let the rental of the parish be 2000*l.* and the labourers in constant employ 100, and the surplus labourers 10. A (an individual or a class) uses land to the extent of 1000*l.* per annum, and employs 50 labourers. A rate is then made for the surplus ten upon all the occupiers, who may either pay the rate or employ their share of the surplus men: A neither wants the men, nor likes to pay the rate; the next week, therefore, he employs only 40 men, and throws out of employ 10. The number of surplus labourers therefore then becomes 20, of which his share (one half) he may, as before, either employ or pay for. But he now wants these 10—he still has only his fifty workmen—and the *bonâ fide* surplus of 10 men is left to be supported by the other half of the parish.

2dly, Suppose the rate made for all the labourers. The occupiers in every parish may be divided into two classes—the agricultural, who have a demand for labour—the tradesman, the tithe-owner, the householder, &c. who have little or none. It is clear, then, that a rate of this description will allot to the first class only those (and not even those) labourers which it wants, and will leave to the second the burden of the *whole* surplus population.

3dly, Suppose the rate made for the winter months. The occupiers will consequently defer all the work that they possibly can till this sea-

son, in order to be able to work out their quota of the rate. The consequence will be a slack demand for work during the summer. The rate, in fact, will not increase the quantum of work found during the whole year. Let, moreover, A and B be rated in the same amount—the one in respect of a grazing farm, the other for woodlands: it is clear that the former may have little or no demand for labour, while the latter may require even more than his quota; or, he may have no woods to cut in a given winter, and may therefore be called upon to pay his quota of the rate without the means of avoiding it, or the next year he may employ even more than his proportion of labourers.

4thly, If the rate is made for all the labourers for the whole year, the certainty of work will entirely paralyse all exertion on the part of the labourer to seek, even under the most favourable circumstances, work for himself elsewhere, and will make him perfectly careless of giving satisfaction to his master, as under all circumstances he will be sure of employ. It is needless to enlarge upon this.

The different projects of labour-rates all assume the compulsory employment of *all* the labourers. Now, in every parish there are a number of labourers (if they may be so called) who are of that character that they are worse than valueless on the land; and yet these must

fall to the lot of some employer to provide with work, or else to pay the rate without an equivalent: the injustice of this is obvious. The plan of classing every labourer according to his value, and affixing his price, to be done fairly is almost impossible. A man may be worth 14*s.* a-week as a thrasher, and not worth 9*s.* as a woodman: and were the plan possible, it would only be affixing a public stigma on all those who were inserted in the lists at an inferior price, whether on account of inability or infamy. "Oh! you are only a ten-penny man." The ill feeling this would create, it is unnecessary to point out.

Another insurmountable objection to a labour-rate, would be the *certain extinction of piece-work*. The object of each person liable to the rate, would be so to apportion his work as to make it last through the greatest possible period of time. If by day-work he could make the same quantity of labour extend through six days, that at piece-work would take only five, under the operation of a labour-rate he would employ six men at day-work, instead of five at the great. Upon the habits and comforts of the *industrious* poor, the effect would be fatal indeed.

The besetting fallacy, however, of a labour-rate lies in this, that it assumes as a principle that the valuation in the poor-book is the measure of the capability of the employment of labour. Now nothing can be clearer than that this in no

respect holds true. The same value in the poor-book may represent land or houses, hops, grass, or trade. Now, the principle of the poor-laws is to rate property generally only to the support of the *bonâ fide* surplus labourers, and for them only to such an extent as they may be unable to support themselves. When they can contribute in part to their maintenance, the poor-rates can only justly supply the remainder. The real effect of a labour-rate is to tax property, and to treat the labourers as if the whole of them were become paupers, and entirely dependent on the parish for relief. It would act most unjustly towards a large portion of rateable property, and, it is to be feared, most demoralisingly towards the labourers themselves, for whose benefit it is intended, by putting the whole class on the same footing, and annihilating all distinction between the moral and immoral workman.

POSTSCRIPT

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

THE preceding observations were principally written in answer to the queries circulated by the poor-law commissioners, and being addressed to persons highly conversant with the subject, may perhaps have been compressed in a manner obscure to the general reader. The few copies of the first edition of this work that were struck off, were intended rather for private distribution than for public circulation, and can scarcely be said to have been sufficiently extended to have afforded me an opportunity of becoming acquainted with all the objections that may be urged against it. I find, in the first place, however, that I am accused of having confounded cottage allotments with home colonisation; and that the advocates of the former system anxiously disclaim the perils of the latter. I confess I am at a loss to distinguish the difference, in principle, between thirty or forty cottages, each with its allotment situated at a moderate distance from each other, or the same number of cottages congregated together, and the

allotments concentrated in a home colony. I am at a loss to see how, by either of these systems—how, by saying to an already surplus population, “Marry, and be given in marriage, and we will provide you with houses and lands,” that the moral restraint is to be re-created, or providence and foresight again to be revived. If the starvation-wages of the allowance system have already broken down the independence of the labourer, shall we expect that the higher premium for improvidence here held out, shall have a less destructive or a more retarded effect?

But, supposing these home colonies, or cottage allotments, to become general, are we certain that they will accomplish the purpose for which they are designed? The object is, to relieve the market of the excess of labourers, and to adjust the supply to the legitimate demand. You put, then, the surplus number into the condition of small capitalists, and you expect, by withdrawing them from the market, to restore it to its wholesome limits. But what are the means by which they are to be confined to their new occupations? Or what is the security that they will not again become competitors in that very market from which you have abstracted them? We know that the cottiers that we already have in this country labour for hire; and that those of Ireland depend upon it for the principal part of their support. Will not the season that is slack of work with the hired la-

bourer be slack with these new cottiers also? and with these means to fall back upon, what is to prevent their underselling the regular labourer, who has no such means, and thus contributing to the still further reduction of wages? But, supposing the existing generation to fulfil the conditions of their contract, will they not be rearing a rising and more numerous generation? and will not those press with greater weight upon the then labourers, who, in the interim, will also have increased? We must be careful, while we are devising means for the extinction of pauperism, that we are not breeding it in an accelerated ratio.

I must again repeat, that my objection to cottage allotments is not on the ground that they are not in individual cases a benefit to the occupier, but that it is a fallacy to depend upon them as a cure for the redundancy of labour; and, consequently, whatever advantages individuals may derive, that they will not be a benefit to the labourers as *a class*. The Quarterly Report of the "Sussex Association for improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes," No. I., p. 28, says, "They will answer the purpose of taking the superfluous quantity of labour (where it really exists) out of the market, and of raising what is left to its just proportion;" and, page 30, it gives an extract in favour of allotments, from John Denson (who, by the way, was himself the occupier of one), who says, "that the cottager's work upon such will

not materially interfere with his occupation as a day-labourer." Which, then, shall we believe? The *theory* of the report, or the *experience* of the peasant? The report then gives a detailed account of six of these allotments at Lindfield (which I presume are not the least favourable specimens); and it appears that the net proceeds of them average about 2*s.* per week on each, or the wages of one day's work in six. Hence, then, even upon their own shewing, the Association have only provided for one-sixth part of the surplus labour; what will they do with the remainder? Emigration provides for the whole. But, in fact, the report does not contemplate the displacing of any of the ordinary work of the labourer, but that the profit made is to be over and beyond his regular wages. Accordingly, in page 22, it says, "this would give him 2*s.* per week *in addition* to his 12*s.*" Now, if this be the case, and this system is to operate as an increase of wages, surely all experience will tell us that this is equivalent to a premium upon marriage. In the Second Report of the Association, January 1832, we find the following resolution, "That the funds of the society ought principally to be applied towards enabling *married* labourers to support themselves independently of parochial relief, and towards providing them for this purpose with a cow, land, or pig, by loan or otherwise." Now, I think the resolution here given proceeds upon mistaken data, as far as it is

intended to meet the evil of surplus labour. But I can conceive that, in a different form, it might have been made applicable to a highly beneficial purpose. If, instead of the resolution being in favour of the married labourer, it had been in favour of such labourers as had lived as in-door servants in husbandry *unmarried* till thirty years of age, I should say that it would have proceeded upon an admirable principle. It would have tended to restore morality among the single men, to retard the rate of population, and to create a habit of providence and economy among them, in order to enable them to stock their allotments, when they should have become entitled to them.

I shall here insert part of a series of questions proposed a few years since to the parish officers of Rotherfield, by a gentleman in this neighbourhood, together with the answers returned by them.

“ *Question* 11. Have the enclosures and system of cottage-building on Crowborough materially contributed to increase the pauper population of Rotherfield?

“ *Answer. Yes, very much.* ‘ Resolved, at a vestry meeting, Feb. 22, 1827, that, in consequence of the increasing evil daily arising from huts and small tenements erected in this parish, we are determined to object to all grants and admittances in this parish, requested in future by any person or persons whomsoever.

‘ Signed by the Churchwardens, Overseers, and several Inhabitants.’

“ Q. 12. When were they first allowed to be made ?

“ A. In a slight degree upwards of 100 years, but at the fullest extent about eight years, ago.

“ Q. 13. By whom ?

“ A. The Earl of Abergavenny.

“ Q. 14. Upon what terms ?

“ A. In consideration that the person should pay five shillings per acre quit-rent, and after two years to receive no relief of the parish : if he did, to give up his land to the said earl. The consequence has been, that the occupier has been obliged to sell his land, thereby bringing other families into the parish, and himself ultimately has become a pauper.”

I believe the facts at present are much stronger than as represented in these answers. The evil has now become so great, that the parish buys up the allotments as they are offered for sale, to prevent a succession of families from becoming pauperised on them. The language of the resolution of the vestry uses the word “ huts.” They are, however, very decent, and indeed good, cottages, built of stone found on the spot, with slated roofs. The allotments vary in size, generally about four acres, but some as large as ten or twelve.

At the same time that I am opposed to cottage allotments and home colonies, I must not be misunderstood as extending those observations to *gardens*.

To the extent of from a quarter to half an acre of ground, a garden is indispensable to the well-being of every labourer. The practice also of many occupiers of finding a cow for their workmen at a moderate price is highly beneficial; but when the labourer finds it himself, the risk of loss is too great to be safely incurred.

The next objection I shall mention, and probably that in which most of those who dissent from me will concur, is, "*that there is too much iron in the system I propose.*" This, however, appears to me to be one of those objections that strike most forcibly at first sight, and that the effect of all subsequent reasoning upon the subject is to diminish the first impression. Poor-laws are eminently artificial. In a natural state, man is exposed to hunger, cold, and want, and even providence and forethought cannot protect him against contingencies that no circumspection could have foreseen, and no power that he possesses averted. Any system that interposes itself to extreme privation—that affords sustenance, however homely—lodging and raiment, however poor—places the individual in a better situation than he would have been placed in at least by nature. Can the claimant demand *more*? Can the community assign *less*?* But beyond this *all*

* The abstract right to existence at the public cost in the infancy of a community, while property is still unappropriated,

is the province of charity. "The fundamental mistake to which I allude (says Copleston) is the confusion of moral duty with the task of legislation. That what all individuals *ought* to do, it is the business of the laws to *make* them do, is a plausible position, and has actually been adopted by some of the ablest and most virtuous men. But nothing, in reality, is more fallacious—nothing less congruous with the nature of man, and with that state of discipline and trial which his present existence is clearly designed to be. In the first place, it destroys the very essence, not only of benevolence, but of all virtue, to make it compulsory; or, to speak more properly, it is a contradiction in terms. An action, to be virtuous, must be voluntary. It requires a living and a free agent to give it birth. If we attempt to transplant it from our own bosoms to the laws, it withers and dies. It cannot inhabit an inert and inanimate mass; and the fabled attempt of Prometheus to breathe life into his lump of clay, was

may perhaps admit of a question; but in the advanced stage of society at which we are arrived, it appears to me no longer doubtful. Large bodies of men are trained to particular employments, to meet the demands of wealth and the caprices of fashion. A change of taste, a new machine, or a transition from peace to war, may, in an instant, reduce thousands to a state of starvation. Surely then, if the community require for its own wants the exercise of these precarious arts, if it withdraw or alter its demand, it must at least insure the victims of its own fickleness from the extremes of privation.

not more presumptuous than the endeavour to inspire a code of laws with that principle which, by its very essence, is inherent in a moral and accountable being.

“ The error is fostered by the promiscuous application of words to individuals and to the laws, which, in their proper signification, belong to the former only. We talk of mild, of merciful, of benevolent, of humane laws. The professed object of such laws is to do what mild, and merciful, and benevolent men are disposed to do. But even supposing them capable of *effecting* this, yet the humanity is lost as soon as the act proceeds from a dead letter, not from the spontaneous impulse of any individual; and, in fact, this endeavour to invest the laws with the office of humanity, inconsistent and impracticable as it is, when attempted from the purest motives, does, in reality, often originate from an imperfect sense of moral obligation, and a low degree of benevolence, in men themselves. Absurd as the thought is when expressed in words, man would be virtuous, be humane, be charitable, *by proxy*. This, however, not only the Divine purpose, and the declared end of our being, but common sense itself, forbids. To throw off the care of want, and disease, and misery, upon the magistrate, is to convert humanity into police, and religion into a statute-book.”

It is to be observed, that, under the present system, every thing works towards a progressive,

and, I fear, a rapid deterioration. To the pauper it is a premium upon improvidence—a bonus upon chicanery; the more importunate he is, the more he receives; the greater his cunning, the higher is his relief. Will the overseer investigate every separate claim? Will he feel no leaning towards his own dependents? And the relief he affords to them, *dare* he refuse to others? Nor is the magistrate a greater check: his power is only exercised in an appeal from the overseer. If he perform his duty rigidly and fearlessly, he becomes a marked man. If, on the other hand, he is “charitable by proxy,” out of funds to which he has not contributed, and in relief of sufferings which his imagination augments by his ignorance of them, he acquires the title of “the poor man’s friend.” With the best intentions, both the overseer and the magistrate *must* be constantly deceived; nor, while the present system of relief is allowed, can I for a moment conceive it to be otherwise. Hence, then, the necessity, the paramount necessity, for a test.* Relief *must* be offered

* I insert the following anecdote, taken from an anonymous pamphlet on Pauperism and the Poor-laws in 1821. It not only illustrates my principle, but may perhaps afford a useful hint in similar circumstances:—“A gentleman travelling some time ago between London and Cheltenham, observed a pump by the road-side, for which there was no apparent use. He asked a man to explain the reason, which the latter did as follows:—Some years ago, a neighbouring village was much in-

in that form, and in that form only, which shall make the utmost exertions of the most enduring industry preferable to the condition on which it shall be received.* It must be a *fixed* and intelligible condition—not left to the caprices of a vestry, fluctuating with every new incomer into a parish—not apportioned by the misguided sympathies of each individual magistrate, each framing a different scale, varying with the endless diversities of the human temperament.

I cannot impress too strongly upon my readers, that any plan which does not embrace *a test—a self-acting corrective*—will infallibly be a failure. Systems founded upon the moral feeling of the pauper, the activity of public officers, and the courage and discrimination of magistrates, as long

festated by beggars; and a gentleman who resided there, dug a well and erected this pump, in order to give employment to such as asked for relief. The mode adopted was, to present each person with two buckets, in order that, for a certain time, and for a certain small sum proportioned to the labour, he might fill them, and carry water to a field at some distance, which required irrigation. In consequence, the village was very shortly avoided by these sturdy and unwelcome visitors; and the pump remains of no other earthly use than as a memento of this gentleman's acumen."

* The reader is to understand that the pauper is to have no claim, as a matter of right, even to the house. It will still be at the discretion of the parish officer, or magistrate, to determine whether the applicant is a proper object for relief; but if so, that he should be confined to that description of relief.

as human nature remains unchanged, must necessarily eventually fail. A select vestry act, and various other plans, may produce, and have produced, a transient benefit; but it is not to such means that we must look for a permanent and effectual cure.

“Nothing, indeed, is more natural than the history of such plans. They spring out of some strong necessity, or some prevailing opinion of the age. They are nursed with care in their infancy, and actively superintended by some benevolent and patriotic men; and, while the zeal lasts, while the authors of them are flattered with observing their success, and are enabled to point to the fruits of their own exertions, no symptom of decay appears. But a life so precarious is shorter even than the life of man: it is commensurate, not with the existence, but with the activity only and the perseverance of individuals, and seldom lives, in full vigour, through half a generation.”*

Let it, moreover, be remembered, that the plan I advocate is neither a hasty nor a sweeping one. It is to apply only to those who have been born within the present century†—to but a small portion of the existing population—to the able-bodied and the young. It is to be applied with the alter-

* Copleston.

† Should it be thought more advisable to adopt the year 1810, instead of 1800, from which the system should take date, it would still leave the principle of my proposition untouched.

native of emigration*—that emigration which so many of our labourers desire. And is emigration a cruel alternative? The American President shall return the answer:—

“ *Our* children (says he) by thousands yearly leave the land of their birth, to seek new homes in distant regions. Does humanity weep at these painful separations from every thing, animate and inanimate, with which the young heart has become entwined? Far from it. It is rather a source of joy, that our country affords scope where our young population may range unconstrained in body and mind, developing the powers and faculties of man in his highest perfection. These remove hundreds and almost thousands of miles, at their own expense, purchase the lands they occupy, and support themselves, at their own home, from the moment of their arrival. The waves of population and civilisation are now rolling to the westward, and we now propose to acquire the countries occupied by the red men of the south and west, by a fair exchange, and, at the expense of the United States, to send them to a land where their existence may be prolonged, and perhaps made perpetual. Can it be cruel in this government, when, by events which it cannot control, the Indian is made discontented in his ancient home,

* When emigration becomes a national measure, it must be conducted by government upon settled principles, and must probably include colonisation.

to purchase his lands, to give him a new and extensive territory, to pay the expenses of his removal, and support him a year in his new abode? *How many thousands of our own people would gladly embrace the opportunity of removing to the west on such conditions? If the offers made to the Indians were made to them, they would be hailed with gratitude and joy."*

I must here guard against an impression that may be conveyed by these remarks, which might lead to a fatal disappointment. The workhouse system is at present legal, and funds for emigration may, in many instances, be raised by voluntary contributions. But were the plan here advocated attempted to be put in execution at the mere instigation of an individual, or by a vote of vestry, it would probably produce an irritation that would lead to disastrous consequences. When, in the parish of Mayfield, it was rumoured that I intended interfering to reduce the rates, it was immediately suspected by the paupers that I was opposed to their interests. On the door of the first vestry I attended, I found affixed a notice, that "they intended washing their hands in my blood." In 1826, a threat of that kind was readily disregarded—at present, it would be consummated in a riot or a fire. But if the alteration be the act of the legislature, it assumes a different aspect. It comes with the sanction of the law, and, however it may be murmured at, the odium is removed

from the obnoxious vestryman or the individual magistrate. The complaining pauper looks round to the adjacent parishes, and the neighbouring benches. He sees his lot the lot of all ; and is told that, however he may meet with sympathy, there is no power of redress. He may hope to intimidate a vestry, but he cannot dare to oppose a government. And here is the point where private beneficence comes into action. When the strict line of parochial relief is once defined—when it is once decided that the able-bodied labourer, however numerous his family, shall no longer depend upon it, he will appeal, with a most powerful appeal, to all the social charities, to preserve him in his independent station ; and it is an appeal to which I know the farmers will readily respond. I have seen a good deal of the farmers, and a good deal of the labourers. I have seen every trick practised by both parties, to derive to themselves a benefit from the rates. Nevertheless, I know the farmers to be a very valuable class, and alive to every proper feeling ; and of the labourers, till the unfortunate year of 1830, I should say, in the main, their conduct had been exemplary. But deep-seated causes, though unseen, have long been undermining the habits of the peasantry ; and the unhappy measure that legalised the beer-shops, and circulated amongst the greater part of them the penny sedition of the radical press, is still more rapidly effecting a separation of those orders.

The lowest class have been taught to believe that they are unnecessarily oppressed, and they look to that immediately above them, with which alone they are acquainted, for a relief which it is no longer in their power to afford. Every succeeding year has found the means of the agriculturist reduced, while the demands upon him, from a daily increasing population, have become more urgent. If the present system continue for a few years longer, I see nothing but the ruin of the agriculturist, concomitant with a servile war.

The question of surplus labour I have found so much misunderstood, that I am induced again to offer a few observations upon it. I hear it commonly asked, "How many labourers are there in a given parish to the 100 acres?" and the answer may probably be, "Four." "Are four men more than sufficient to cultivate 100 acres of land?" And it is replied, "That they are not." "Consequently, if the parish were properly cultivated, there would be no surplusage of labour." The fallacy is this, that parishes are not divided into parallelograms of 100 acres each. Now, though it is true that the proper cultivation of 100 acres may require four men, a farm of 200 acres will not require more than seven; and one of 300 acres, perhaps only nine. A farm of 50 acres will not employ two, and one of 25, probably *none*. In the two latter cases, the occupier, though called a small farmer, is, in fact, a la-

bourer. He is not only so, but performs much more work individually than the hired labourer; he is working, as it were, always at the great. Hence, it will be found that with the same number of acres, and the same population, the parish, with the greater number of small occupations, will employ the fewer labourers. Large occupations presume large capitals; and where these exist, it will generally appear that they employ in proportion fewer teams and more manual labour. Of late years, however, from the reduced profits of agriculture, the larger farms have too generally received nearly the minimum of cultivation.

I need hardly observe, that if an occupier of 100 acres use land of such a description, as in this neighbourhood, as to require four horses to plough it, he still must keep that number, though the same team would be sufficient for 150 acres. He will endeavour to make them pay, when unemployed on land, by hiring them out at job-work. It does not follow that they do not pay him, but they pay him as a *carrier*, and not as an agriculturist. He, however, equally finds work for the men that go with his team, and that gives him an *apparent* excess of labourers above the other classes of occupiers. The only way to ascertain the real fund of labour in a parish, is to class the farms according to their sizes, and place against each class the number of labourers it can employ. The actual number

must vary with local circumstances—as wood, corn, or hops predominate. From the answers, before alluded to, returned by the parish-officers of Rotherfield, it appeared that the labourers in constant employ in that parish were 418, and in occasional employ 120; and the wood and plain land in the parish amounted to 13,700 acres. Now, this return gives four men to the hundred acres; and yet it appears that 120 of them have only occasional employment. The classification of the farms, however, at once explains the difficulty: it was as follows:

			Acres.	Total acres.
Farms from	25 to 50 acres	. . 52	} say averaging	38 . . 1976
Ditto	50 to 75	. . 29		62 . . 1758
Ditto	75 to 100	. . 15		87 . . 1305
Ditto	100 to 150	. . 21		125 . . 2625
Ditto	upwards	. . 17		300 . . 5100
			134	12,764

The return ought to have shewn the number of occupations under 25 acres, which, I know, is considerable in that parish. But, looking to the account as it stands, we find that the two first classes embrace an extent of 3734 acres. Now, this quantity of land, at the rate of four men to the hundred acres, would furnish employment for 149 labourers; but from what I know of the parish—and I myself use land in it—I am not afraid to say that these holdings do not afford constant work to more than one hired labourer

on each occupation, or, in the whole, to 81 workmen. This, then, at once throws out of employment 68 men, and amply accounts for 120 having only occasional employ.

A friend of mine, who had some doubts whether the apparent surplus population in this county were not the result rather of the unequal distribution than of the actual redundancy of labourers, procured returns from thirty-seven out of forty parishes, which are comprised in the Rape of Hastings. These are exclusive of the Cinque Ports, which are not part of the county. The returns, contrary to his expectation, satisfied him that there existed a real surplus over any demand that could be fairly anticipated for it. There is nothing, I believe, peculiar in that Rape to justify any suspicion that it forms an exception to the general state of the country: if it be more woody, it has little down, and less marsh. The result is as follows:

No. of occupiers of land employing labourers . . .	498
No. of occupiers of land not employing labourers. . .	200
Labourers in agriculture above 20 years of age . . .	4639
No. of acres of plain land 101,680 }	Acres. 129,593
No. of acres of wood . . 27,913 }	

Now, it is evident that the second class of occupiers must themselves be considered as labourers, and, in fact, as labourers absorbing more than an average share of work. The number of labourers, therefore, will be 4839. To this might

fairly be added, upon the same ground, at least half of the first class; however, I shall not include them. According to the population abstracts of 1821, the males between 15 and 20 years of age in this Rape were 10 per cent of the whole number of males. The male population of these parishes is at present 17,035: hence the number of boys to be employed would be about 1703. Of these, however, we must deduct about one-tenth, as sons of the occupiers of the first class, leaving a clear number of 1533. Assume two of these to be equal to one man, and we get, as the total number of labourers, 5605. Now, the woods will afford work for about three men to the hundred acres for four months; or its equivalent, one man for the whole year: hence, the woodland will employ 279 labourers; leaving 5326 to be employed on the plain land, or *about* $5\frac{1}{4}$ men to the 100 acres.

But we will look at this question in another way. Let us suppose that 25*s.* per acre is expended in workmanship on the plain land, and I need not say that this is *very much* beyond the average, and 31*l.* 4*s.* per 100 acres (or one man at 12*s.* per week for the year) on the wood: then we have

101,680 plain land at 25 <i>s.</i> per acre . .	£127,100
27,913 wood at 31 <i>l.</i> 4 <i>s.</i> per 100 acres . .	8,704
Total fund for payment of wages . .	£135,804

Now, divide this amount by 31*l.* 4*s.*, the earnings of one man per annum at 12*s.* per week, and it gives us the number of labourers that it can support, viz. 4352. But the total number of labourers is 5605: hence there are 1253 in the Rape of Hastings alone, who are *bond fide* surplus. If the same excess prevail in the other five Rapes in this county, the total number of surplus labourers in Sussex will be 7518; and supposing these maintained by their parishes at 6*s.* per week, they would cost the county 117,255*l.* per annum. Shall we any longer wonder at the magnitude of our rates? or, after this, can expense be urged as a valid argument against emigration? Were only half this sum annually applied to that purpose, how soon would this item be obliterated from our accounts! If we are tired of paying any longer this enormous impost; if our inability to meet it be daily increasing; if we wish to eradicate the many *other* evils so deeply rooted in our present poor-laws, it is by this, I am convinced, we must begin. Wise is the observation of Mr. Senior, when he says, “Who, in the present state of those districts, will *venture* to carry into execution a real and effectual alteration of the poor-laws? Remove, by emigration, the pauperism that now oppresses those districts, and such an alteration, though it may remain difficult, will cease to be impracticable.”

This brings me to the last objection that I

shall notice, viz. the difficulty of establishing efficient workhouses. The present system of workhouses in general is so bad — they are so frequently receptacles for the lazy and the vagabond — without discipline — terrorless — and depraved, that I do not wonder that they should be regarded with indiscriminating aversion. Instead of answering the purposes for which they were designed, they are frequently dens of wretchedness to those whom they were intended to protect, and places of desire to those whom they ought to repel. But the reason of this is easily accounted for, when we recollect in whose hands their management is placed. The law has supposed that they would be best controlled by those from whose funds their expenses were defrayed. Unhappy supposition — fatal delusion! Let any one study the elements of a parish vestry, and analyse the reasons and the motives that impel it, and say whether we could have anticipated a different result? To a workhouse governed on the present system, I should myself be the foremost to object. But that was not my proposition; it was to the legislation of the state, and not to that of a vestry, that I meant to confide the regulation of its discipline. Upon mature consideration, I am inclined to believe that the plan would be best carried into effect by leaving the present workhouses as receptacles for the aged and infirm. The Reform Act has divided

the county into convenient sections, and I would build *de novo* a house of industry for the reception of the *able-bodied* paupers in each. In the first instance they would be small; and, if their inmates increased upon them, the very surplus might, in a great measure, be employed in enlarging their dimensions. The cost of the erections, and of the establishment, would be defrayed by the parishes of the section—the cost of the paupers by the parishes that sent them. The enforcement of the discipline pointed out by the statute must be confided to visitors selected from the district; and, to insure success, inspectors-general should be appointed to report to government, analogous to the inspectors-general of prisons in Ireland. Fines should be enacted and rigidly enforced for contravention of the law, and a public prosecutor appointed for that purpose. The workhouse at Liverpool contains, on an average, about 1600 inmates, and perfect discipline is enforced in it by the governor and four clerks. “It is as easy to control 1600 paupers,” said the governor to a friend of mine, “as 500.” The governor of the workhouse at Brighton told me he saw no difficulty in my proposition, if sufficient power were afforded by the legislature. If sturdy paupers were refractory and insolent, they should be sentenced, as at present, to the discipline of a gaol. If repeated correction failed to reform, I cannot see what

claim they would have to be supported at all by the earnings of the industrious ; and if they could not be turned loose upon society with safety, it would become a question, whether they should be allowed to remain in the country at all. The proposition may indeed be *iron*, but it is with iron evils that we have to deal. Let it be remembered, that with emigration going on, if this system could but be made effective for a quarter of a century, our position would have become so totally altered, that we should no longer be compelled to deal with the poor-laws *as we can*, but might then do so with safety *as we pleased*.

Since the first publication of this tract, a pamphlet on the corn-laws has appeared from the pen of Lord Milton. As whatever concerns the interest of the land is connected with the subject of the agricultural poor, I shall make no apology for going somewhat at large into his work. In that address he treats the employment of the agricultural population as “ a *collateral* and *incidental* question.” Has it not occurred to his lordship that this *may* be more than an incidental one? Has it not occurred to him that it *may* be a question of police? Has he already forgotten the November of 1830? Or is Yorkshire so fortunately situated as to be beyond the reach of similar desolation?

In 1821 the returns of the population gave in Great Britain :

Families employed in agriculture	978,656
trade, manufacture, &c.	1,350,239

The apparent excess, however, of the latter class is fallacious, and requires reducing by all those trades that are intimately connected with and maintained by the agriculture of the country. The country blacksmith, the plough-wright, the carpenter, and the mason, depend as much upon the returns of the farmer, as the labourer that works upon the land. The proportion will be more nearly represented as 10 to 12.

In the year 1815,* the last year the property-tax was levied, the heads of the landed and commercial returns were thus divided :

Number of occupiers of land exempt from income- tax from the income being under 50 <i>l.</i> per ann. }	114,778
Occupiers of land from 50 <i>l.</i> to 150 <i>l.</i> per annum 432,534 }	474,596
Ditto, above 150 <i>l.</i> 42,062 }	
Total number of occupiers of land	589,374

* It may perhaps be objected, that the proportion which existed between the property of the two classes of land and trade in 1815 is no longer correct. I shall feelingly admit the remark, and acknowledge the depreciation to be greater on the former than on the latter. But I am not aware that, because we have suffered much, it is a *reason* that we should suffer more, unless it be upon the Irish maxim, of first knocking a man down, and then kicking him for falling.

Persons engaged in trade, with income under 50 <i>l.</i> } exempt }	100,760
Do. with incomes above 50 <i>l.</i> to 150 <i>l.</i> 117,306	
Do. from 150 <i>l.</i> to 1000 <i>l.</i> 31,928	152,926
Do. from 1000 <i>l.</i> upwards 3,692	
Total number of persons engaged in trade	253,686

From this statement it appears that the number of persons possessing property in land was considerably *more than double* that of persons embarked in trade.

But we will look at it in another way, viz. as to the relative value of the capital engaged in land or trade, and the analysis of the income-tax gives the following result :

Tax on landed property	£4,257,247
Do. on occupiers of land	2,176,228
	<u>£6,433,475</u>
Tax on commercial property	£2,000,000

Hence the actual income arising from the land, as compared with that arising from trade, was *more than treble*; and that income was a sum to be annually expended in the markets of the kingdom in the purchase of its produce.

So far as to income—now as to capital; the value of the land at thirty years' purchase, and the value of the tenants' property at ten years' purchase upon the income, gives :

Value of the land.	£1,277,174,100
Value of tenant's capital	217,622,800
Total value of agricultural capital	£1,494,796,900
Value of commercial capital at ten years' purchase on the income	£200,000,000

Hence, then, the capital embarked in agriculture is to that of trade *as nearly fifteen to two*.

What, then, is the result of this statement? That the individuals dependent on agriculture, compared with those in trade, are about as five to six. That the number of persons employing capital in land, compared to those in trade, is *more than double*; that their income is *more than treble*; and their capital *more than sevenfold*. This, however, is the class who are to be stigmatised as "*a violent faction*;"* and these are the numbers whose employment, and whose well-being, is to be considered as only "*a collateral and incidental question*."

If there be any truth in the doctrine, that taxes are ultimately paid by the consumer, and that consumption takes place in proportion to income, the taxes paid by the land must be three times as great as those paid by trade—to say nothing of the rates, which are 4,523,288*l.* to 255,775*l.* Now, suppose the corn-laws repealed, will the economists speculate upon the consequent increase in

* It is but justice to Lord Milton to say, that this is not *his* expression.

the commercial capital as more than cent per cent? Will they venture to predict a depreciation in land of less than 25 per cent? Or if they dare to do so, are the fallacies of Mr. Ricardo's speculations on the currency question so long since buried in oblivion, that they will be believed? Nor let them say that that error was Mr. Ricardo's alone. If they saw the fallacy of his reasoning and were silent, they stand self-convicted of being knowing and wilful parties to the misery and ruin which that measure caused. What, then, shall we gain? We shall gain an increase in the manufacturing capital of 200,000,000*l.* : we shall depreciate that on the land by 373,000,000*l.** And this is to benefit a manufacturing population, of whom Sir Robert Peel (who, in this instance at least, must be allowed to be an impartial witness)

* I have always observed, that when the agriculturist is to be sacrificed to the trader, he is told that his interest is intimately bound up with that of the manufacturer. If a corresponding advantage is asked of the manufacturing interest, he is told it is impossible, — that the export trade is far too valuable to admit of it. It is, in fact, the old story, "Heads I win, tails you lose." I never, in fact, could exactly understand the great advantage the agriculturist was to derive from an extended market produced by the depreciation of his own commodities. Upon the sale of a thousand bales of calico, a manufacturer may realise a profit of 1000*l.* If he choose to reduce his profit to 15*s.* upon each, he may *double his sale*, and his profit will become 1500*l.* Manufactures, if the demand be opened for them, may go on increasing to an indefinite extent ; but not so the produc-

observed, " that a change had taken place in their manners, habits, and feelings ; that they were collected in immense cities, and differed, in their relation as regarded landlord and tenant, from the population of any other district. When he saw the great alternation of prosperity and distress which took place among them ; the constant vicissitudes to which they were exposed ; their imprudence in times of prosperity, only working for two or three days in the week, when they had employment, and devoting the rest to dissipation ; when he recollected all the influence which a change of fashion, of speculation, or of affairs, might produce on the state of these individuals, he could not deny that they were peculiarly open to the designs of demagogues."

Mr. Senior has said, in one of his publications,

tion of corn. The powers of the land are limited, and can be only called forth to the uttermost, not by a low, but by the highest price. Land that, in its utmost ordinary cultivation, can produce only three quarters per acre, by no average means can be made to produce four, to compensate a fall in the price of 25 per cent. If it could be done, the gross return at last would but be the same, but the expenditure employed in producing it would be infinitely greater. I can only observe, that as far as my own experience has gone, I have not found that when the price of corn was lowest, the extension of the market offered any compensation to the ruinous terms on which it sold. If it be meant that these prices did not continue *sufficiently long*, I have only to say, that in another year they would have utterly completed the ruin they even then so nearly accomplished.

"It is not with happiness, but with wealth, that I am concerned as a political economist; and I am not only justified in omitting, *but perhaps am bound to omit*, all considerations which have no influence on wealth." It is not, then, for the *happiness of the many* that the agriculturists are to be sacrificed, but for the *wealth of the few*—for they will not dare to say that it is to benefit the *labouring* manufacturer that they clamour for cheap bread. No! cheap bread means low wages, though they have not the candour to avow it.

Εχθρὸς μοι κείνος, ὁμῶς αἰῶας πύλῃσιν

"Ὅς γ' ἑτέρον μὲν κεύθει ἐνὶ φρεσὶν, ἄλλο δὲ βάζει.

They have told the mass that they are to eat cheap bread as a boon; and woe to them when they dare to disappoint them of their prey. The fires which are again desolating our rick-yards and our barns, will then be kindled in the manufactories and the towns.* Nor would the stimulus given to capital afford more than a momentary

* The following circumstance occurred within my own knowledge. The labourers of a principal farmer in this parish went to him a few months since, and said, "They had been told that when the Reform-bill was law, they were to have their bacon, and their cheese, and their flour, at half price; but that it was still as dear as ever, and wished to know if that was right." The farmer replied, "He could not tell them; but he could tell them this, that when bacon and flour were reduced one half in price, he must reduce his wages in the same proportion." The men said, "As to that, they had heard nothing about a reduction in their wages."

prosperity. For a short time the manufacturers would prosper on the ruin of the farmer, and all would be activity; but before they had hardly realised their first returns, “the power of machinery would be again overstrained; the markets would be again glutted; and all those violent fluctuations which have already produced so much misery, would again be experienced.”* In the mean time, they will have furnished to the foreigner that alone which he most wants—capital, to compete with them in their own markets; and while they have been imagining that they could add indefinitely to their export trade, they will find that they have lost one of far greater value at home.†

Lord Milton says, that the proposition which affirms the wisdom of the corn-laws, asserts that it is beneficial to a nation to pay a high price for

* Lord Liverpool’s Speech, 25th May, 1820.

† The returns to the House of Commons give the total export trade under 40,000,000*l*. Mr. Jones says, page 310 of his work on the distribution of wealth:—“It is probable, that after allowing for their own consumption, the value of the produce bartered by the agriculturists with the non-agriculturists, is not less than one hundred millions. This fact is well adapted to shew the mutual dependence of the two great classes of the state. Let us suppose, that, scared by losses and apprehensions, the former withdraw one-fourth of their annual expenditure from the task of cultivation. This is a process which every one, acquainted with country business, will know might be quietly and almost imperceptibly affected, by using less labour, or by farming less highly in a variety of ways. If a proportionate diminution in

its subsistence.* His lordship makes the paralogism, and then fastens it on his opponents. The policy of the first introduction of corn-laws is one question—that of their abolition is another. I shall borrow, for the purposes of my argument, an illustration used by Sir Wilmot Horton on a different subject, but which is equally applicable to this. “Let us suppose, says he, that the river Thames had once flowed in a channel which could be shewn to be, for many reasons, much more convenient and advantageous than that in which it now runs; and that, if it had always continued so

production were to follow, and, consequent on that, a similar diminution in the home traffic between the agriculturists and the non-agriculturists, the decrease in the demand for the produce of the industry of these last would be considerably more than equivalent to the decrease of demand which would follow the destruction of one half of the whole foreign trade of the country.”

* It by no means necessarily follows, even were all import duty repealed, that the price of corn would fall. The following is an extract from the Report of the House of Commons in 1814:—
“It is a fact not undeserving the attention of the House, that a considerable duty appears to be levied on all corn exported from the Baltic. Your Committee have reason to believe that this duty has been greatly increased on some occasions, when the wants of this country were most pressing. Indeed, it cannot escape observation, that revenue being the object for which a duty is imposed, and the prices in the Baltic being governed by prices here, the scale of such a duty admits of being increased in proportion to the degree of scarcity and consequent high price existing in this country.”

to flow, many inconveniences attendant on its present course would have been avoided. Admitting this supposition, would any man assert, that the mischief of departure from the original course would now be remedied, if the river were diverted from its modern channel, and made again to flow in its ancient bed? What, in that case, would become of the towns and villages, the warehouses and quays, the dock-yards and arsenals, that have been formed upon its margin? And if the stream of wealth be diverted from that course to which society has adjusted itself, and around which art and industry have been taught to wait, will the superior abstract advantage of its new direction compensate for the desolation and ruin which will be the immediate consequences of the change? All revulsions must, in fact, produce dreadful evils; and it is not the rich alone who must suffer from them; but that immense mass of persons who have been trained and educated to meet the present state of society, and are absolutely co-partners with the rich in their expenditure." Can it, I ask, be *just*, to inflict a positive evil for the attainment, not of an equal good—but for the attainment of wealth, the acquisition of which is at last problematical?

But even upon the original policy of the corn-laws, some doubt might have suggested itself to his lordship's mind—some diffidence as to the correctness of his own views; where Mr. Huskisson

was convinced, "to the entire conviction of his own judgment," even Lord Milton might have paused before he so sweepingly condemned. Yet, the very vote which Lord Milton says is the only one in the course of his long parliamentary life he has ever regretted, is that in which Mr. Huskisson joined, and the defence of which he has so deliberately recorded. His words are as follows :

" If I were not fully convinced, that the consumer in general, but more especially that class of consumers whose subsistence depends on their own industry, would be benefited by the proposed alteration, it would not have had my support. My sole object is to prevent (as far as human means can prevent) bread corn from ever again reaching the late extravagant prices. Can any man have witnessed the scarcities and consequent privations of the people, during six or seven different seasons of the last twenty years, without feeling anxious to guard the country against the return of such severe distress? But if we wish to cure an evil of this alarming magnitude, we must first trace it to its source. What is that source? Obviously this, that until now, we did not, even in good years, grow corn enough for our own consumption. Habitually depending upon foreign supply, that supply was interrupted by war, or by bad seasons abroad. The present war, it is true, is now at an end; but peace is at all times too precarious not to induce us to guard against the repetition of similar cala-

mities, whenever hostilities may be renewed. But even in peace, the habitual dependence on foreign supply is dangerous. We place the subsistence of our own population, not only at the mercy of foreign powers, but also on their being able to spare as much corn as we may want to buy. Suppose, as it frequently happens, the harvest in the same year to be a short one, not only in this country, but in the foreign countries from which we are fed. What follows? The habitually exporting country, France for instance, stops the export of its corn, and feeds its people without any great pressure. The habitually importing country, England, which, even in a good season, has hitherto depended on the aid of foreign corn, deprived of that aid in a year of scarcity, is driven to distress bordering upon famine. There is therefore no effectual security, either in peace or war, against the frequent return of scarcity, approaching to starvation, such as of late years we have so frequently experienced, but in our maintaining ourselves habitually independent of foreign supply. Let the bread we eat be the produce of corn grown among ourselves, and, for one, I care not how cheap it is; the cheaper the better. It is cheap now, and I rejoice at it, because it is altogether owing to a sufficiency of corn of our own growth. But in order to insure a continuance of that cheapness and that sufficiency, we must insure to our own growers that protection against foreign import

which has produced these blessings, and by which alone they can be permanently maintained.

“ The history of the country for the last one hundred and seventy years, clearly proves, on the one hand, *that cheapness produced by foreign import is the sure forerunner of scarcity*; and on the other, that a steady home supply is the only safe foundation of steady and moderate prices. During upwards of one hundred years, up to the year 1765, the import of foreign corn was restrained by very high duties. What was the state of the country during those one hundred years? That in ordinary seasons our own growth supplied a stock of corn fully ample for our own consumption; — that in abundant seasons we had some to spare, which we exported; — that in bad seasons we felt no want, and were under no apprehension; — that the price of corn seldom varied more than a few shillings per quarter; — that we had no years of inordinate gain to the farmer, and of starvation to the consumer; — that prices, instead of rising from year to year, were gradually diminishing: so that at the end of this long period of a century, during which we never imported foreign corn, they were actually one-fifth lower than at the beginning of it. Would to God that we had continued in this salutary system! But in 1765 it was unfortunately abandoned. What has been the result? Precisely the reverse of the former system. Instead of a

steady supply, afforded at steady and moderate prices, we have witnessed frequent and alarming scarcities. Every year our dependence on foreign supplies was increasing, till the war came, and by interrupting that supply, greatly aggravated all our evils ; for, a country which depends on its enemies or its rivals for the food of its people, is never safe in war. In the first eighteen years of this war, we were forced to pay sixty millions of money (to nations, every one of whom has, in the course of it, been our enemy) for a scanty and inadequate supply of foreign corn ; and when for this purpose we had parted with all our gold, and even our silver currency, combined Europe shut its ports against us, and America, co-operating, first laid an embargo, and then went to war. This combination was formed with the vain hope to break our spirit by starving our bodies. We struggled hard both at home and abroad, but by the struggle we have gained much. Abroad, we have subdued our enemies ; at home, we come out of the war with our agriculture so extended and improved, as to make us at this moment independent of foreign supply. We are so at this moment ; and shall I, who, *to the entire conviction of my own judgment*, have traced the long sufferings of the people to a contrary state of things, be deterred from using my honest endeavours in parliament to prevent the recurrence of such sufferings ? For that purpose we must

go back to the principles of our forefathers; and by reverting, as much as possible, to their system, we shall secure to ourselves and our posterity all the benefits which they derived from it.

“ I admit, that if unlimited foreign import, which the war had suspended, were now again allowed, bread might be a little, though a very little cheaper, than it now is, for a year or two. But what would follow? The small farmer would be ruined; improvements would every where stand still; inferior lands now producing corn would be given up, and return to a state of waste; the home consumption and brisk demand for all the various articles of the retail trader, which has so much contributed, even during the pressure of war, to the prosperity of our towns, (and especially of those which are not connected with manufactures or foreign commerce), would rapidly decline; farming servants, and all the trades which depend on agriculture for employment, would be thrown out of work; and the necessary result of the want of work would be, that *wages would fall even more rapidly than the price of corn.* Then comes some interruption to the foreign import, coinciding with the decay of agriculture at home, and corn is suddenly forced up again to a famine price. Such, I conceive, would be the inevitable consequence of again placing ourselves in a state of habitual and increasing dependence on foreign supply. Who, upon the long run,

would profit by such a state of things? *Certainly not the consumer*; but precisely those who have profited too much already from a similar state of things; namely, the overgrown farmers with large capitals. They will be enabled, for two or three years, to bear up against the foreign import; and whenever that import is interrupted, the extravagant prices they will then be enabled to command, will more than repay the temporary losses which their poorer, but not less industrious, neighbour had not the means to withstand. Every one thus forced out of cultivation will insure to them an ultimate increase of profit, and in proportion to that profit will inflict an increased pressure upon the consumer. To protect the small farmer, therefore, is ultimately to protect the people. This is my sole object; and whatever may be the fate of the bill now in the House of Commons, I can most conscientiously declare is, in my opinion, the sole tendency of the plan which that bill is calculated to carry into effect.”*

I pass over, as foreign to my purpose, with many other points of similar weight, the sophism, that because corn is not grown on permanent pastures, the corn-laws afford no protection to

* The agriculturists are under great obligations to Mr. John Ellman, for the publication of “Mr. Huskisson’s Letter to his Constituents at Chichester,” from which the above extract is taken. Mr. Ellman’s Pamphlet on the Corn-laws is well worthy of reperusal at the present time.

them, for the merest ploughboy can repeat to his lordship the agricultural proverb, "down corn, down horn." I proceed to that part of Lord Milton's argument, and indeed his great one, with which I am more immediately concerned, viz. the condition of the labourers as affected by the price of corn. His position, and upon which he has bestowed much pains, is, that the condition of the labourer has improved, as the price of wheat has receded. Upon this point we are at issue. He has inserted a long and ingenious table of the prices of corn and wages, upon which he has attempted to establish his argument; and he thereby professes to shew, that the fall in the price of wages has not been so rapid as in that of wheat. But in arguing from this, even if true, to the conclusion he wishes us to adopt, his lordship, as in other instances besides this, appears to have been guilty of a *petitio principii*. The prosperity of the labourer is not measured by the mere rate of wages, but by his *power of obtaining* those wages.* A man

* The "Annual Register," speaking of the year 1824, observes, "Wheat, which in 1822 afforded an average of only 43s. 3d. per quarter, gave in 1823 an average of 51s. 9d.; and in 1824, the price increased so much, that the average for it was 62s. This rise in the price of provisions was not attended with any inconvenience to the working classes, *for the demand for labour secured to them steady employment and good wages*. In the cotton trade there was a rapid increase, and the manufacturers of wool, iron, and hardware, were equally prosperous."

who has constant work at 2*s.* a day, is not benefited by the rise in wages to 4*s.* a day, if the demand for his labour be immediately reduced to three days in the week. In the high-priced times of corn, an idle day was unknown to the labourer—his labour was a matter of competition—his services were anticipated by the eager candidates for them—he worked seven days in the week. Now, with a comparatively low price of corn, and a deteriorated capital depressing the land, let the highways and the gravel-pits attest his altered state; let the riots and the fires which have not yet ceased, refute the hypothesis of his improved condition.

But his lordship has gone into figures, and I will do the same; and I think I can establish—as satisfactorily, at least, as he has done—that the condition of the labourer has not only not improved with the cheapness of corn, but that pauperism has increased with, and in proportion to it. The annual returns of the expenditure of the poor-rates, from the year 1812-13 to the present time (all that are connectedly published), are before us. Lord Milton has himself given the prices of wheat for the same period. I need not observe that the real pressure of the poor-rate is not the actual sum expended, but the number of quarters of corn which that sum represents; and that the number of quarters of corn so ascertained becomes the real measure of the increasing or

decreasing ratio of pauperism. Now let us examine the facts. In the following table the amount of rate is taken from the Parliamentary Return, the price of wheat from Lord Milton, substituting only the price per quarter instead of that of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the bushel, and the fourth column represents the pauperism of the kingdom as measured in wheat.

Year.	Rate.	Price of Wheat per Quarter.		Value of Rate in Qrs. of Wheat.
	£.	s.		
1812-13	6,656,106	126	....	1,056,524
1813-14	6,294,581	109	....	1,154,969
1814-15	5,418,846	73	....	1,484,615
1815-16	5,724,839	64	....	1,789,012
1816-17	6,910,925	75	....	1,842,913
1817-18	7,870,801	93	....	1,692,645
1818-19	7,516,704	84	....	1,789,691
1819-20	7,330,254	73	....	2,008,287
1820-21	6,959,251	66	....	2,108,863
1821-22	6,358,704	54	....	2,355,075
1822-23	5,772,962	44	....	2,624,073
1823-24	5,736,900	53	....	2,164,867
1824-25	5,786,989	64	....	1,808,434
1825-26	5,928,505	68	....	1,743,677
1826-27	6,441,089	58	....	2,221,065
1827-28	6,298,003	56	....	2,249,286
1828-29	6,332,411	60	....	2,110,803
1829-30	6,829,042	66	....	2,069,406

Now, if the reader will examine this table, he will find in those years which are bracketed in the third column, that the price of wheat was uniformly falling, and that the amount of pauperism was as uniformly rising. If, on the other

hand, he examine those bracketed in the fourth column, when the price was rising, he will find as regularly that pauperism decreased. He will find that the *greatest* quantity of pauperism was in 1822-23, when the price of corn was *lowest*, and the *least* in 1812-13, when it was *highest*. If a table of figures can prove any thing, this abundantly proves the fallacy of Lord Milton's theory, and demonstrates that the prosperity of the labourer is *not* in an inverse ratio to the price of corn. There is one year, it will be observed, that is not included in any of the brackets, and which apparently forms an exception to my position. I say apparently, for it in fact strikingly illustrates it. The year excepted is 1816-17, the year of the memorable wet harvest, when the corn was out even to November. The heavy expenses of that disastrous period, together with the small price at which large quantities of the damaged corn was sold, crippled the means of the farmer, and in that proportion, as his capital suffered, pauperism shewed a corresponding increase.*

Anxiously desiring to investigate this subject in all its bearings, and suspecting that an analysis of a manufacturing district would afford a different

* The facts come out as reasoning *à priori* would lead us to expect. Were wages paid in corn instead of in money, the surplus that remained to the labourer beyond his own consumption, would exchange for a greater or lesser value, *cæteris paribus*, according as the price of corn was higher or lower, and the condition of the labourer would vary directly, and not inversely, accordingly.

result, I submitted the county of Lancaster to a similar test. If any county should establish the truth of Lord Milton's theory, and the falsity of mine, *that* should be the one; and yet the result is hardly less striking than in that of the whole kingdom; and while it sufficiently serves to justify mine, it throws suspicion upon his. The figures are as follow :—

COUNTY OF LANCASTER.

Year.	Rate.	Price of wheat		Value of rate in	
	£.	per quarter.		qra. of wheat.	
		s.			
1812-13 ..	306,797	.....	126	.....	48,697
1813-14 ..	265,347	.....	109	.....	48,687
1814-15 ..	213,047	.....	73	.....	58,369
1815-16 ..	222,116	.....	64	.....	69,411
1816-17 ..	336,485	.....	75	.....	{89,729
1817-18 ..	372,964	.....	93	.....	{80,207
1818-19 ..	322,059	.....	84	.....	76,680
1819-20 ..	317,058	.....	73	.....	86,865
1820-21 ..	288,689	.....	66	.....	87,481
1821-22 ..	249,585	.....	54	.....	92,438
1822-23 ..	219,411	.....	44	.....	99,732
1823-24 ..	203,399	.....	53	.....	{76,754
1824-25 ..	213,838	.....	64	.....	{66,824
1825-26 ..	236,173	.....	68	.....	69,462
1826-27 ..	347,912	.....	58	.....	119,969
1827-28 ..	289,335	.....	56	.....	{103,333
1828-29 ..	260,891	.....	60	.....	{86,963
1829-30 ..	297,674	.....	66	.....	90,204

To place this matter in a clearer point of view, I shall arrange the above figures, not according to the order of years, but of pauperism, beginning with the highest, and then placing against this

column the price of wheat in each respective year. Now, if Lord Milton be right, we shall find the highest price of corn at the head of the column, opposite to the highest degree of pauperism, and the prices gradually falling as pauperism diminishes. In the fourth column, I shall give the average price of wheat for three periods of six years—the whole number being eighteen; and, lastly, I shall give it upon Lord Milton's system of cycles of five years, one year being respectively added to, and subtracted from, each preceding cycle.

COUNTY OF LANCASTER.

Year ending Lady-day.	Rate in quarters of corn.	Price per quarter.	Average price of wheat for each six years.	Average price for each cycle of 5 years, one year being added to, and subtracted from, each preceding 5 years.
1827 ..	119,969 ..	58	58 10	
1828 ..	103,333 ..	56		
1823 ..	99,732 ..	44		
1822 ..	92,438 ..	54		
1830 ..	90,204 ..	66		55 7
1817 ..	89,729 ..	75	71 6	59
1821 ..	87,481 ..	66		61
1829 ..	86,963 ..	60		64 2
1820 ..	86,865 ..	73		68
1818 ..	80,207 ..	93		73 4
1824 ..	76,754 ..	53	84 0	69
1819 ..	76,680 ..	84		72 7
1826 ..	69,462 ..	68		74 2
1816 ..	69,411 ..	64		72 4
1825 ..	66,824 ..	64		66 7
1815 ..	58,369 ..	73	84 0	70 7
1813 ..	48,697 ..	126		79
1814 ..	48,687 ..	109		87 2

Here, then, the facts are diametrically opposed to what we are taught by Lord Milton to expect. The average price of wheat in the three periods in the fourth column is in an ascending instead of a descending scale ; and the ratio of prices in the last column affords, with hardly an exception, the same result. And this, too, let it be remembered, in the most manufacturing county in England, where, if cheap bread could be a gain, its advantages should most distinctly appear.

But even Lord Milton's own data afford no satisfactory proof of his own position ; and in order to shew this, I shall take the same period above discussed, and place the excess of wages, as given by him, in each respective year, in the order of its amount, and the price of the corn opposite to it ; and we shall not find, as Lord Milton asserts, that the diminution in the labourer's means has been coincident with a rise in wheat.

	Excess of wages above ¾ of a bushel of wheat.			Price of wheat per quarter.	
	s.	d.		s.	
1814	7 11	.....	73	
1815	6 8	.....	64	
1820	6 6	.....	66	
1822	6 4	.....	44	
1827	6 4	.....	56	
1826	6 2	.....	58	
1828	6 0	.....	60	
1819	5 11	.....	73	
1821	5 6	.....	54	
1829	5 6	.....	66	

	Excess of wages above $\frac{1}{3}$ of a bushel of wheat.		Price of wheat per quarter.
	s.	d.	
1825	5	4	68
1818	5	0	84
1813	4	11	109
1816	4	9	75
1824	4	8	64
1823	4	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	53
1817	4	3	93
1812	3	6	126

The last of these years is the only one that fully bears out Lord Milton's assertion; the rest are at variance with, and, for the most part, in opposition to it. Thus we find, that when the excess is greatest, and consequently the price of corn should be at a minimum, it is in fact nearer at a maximum, there being out of the eighteen years only five in which that price is exceeded. Again, when we take the sixteenth year of the series (1823), when corn should be within two of the maximum, it is within one of the minimum, the year 1822, when it was 44s., being the only year when it was lower.

I shall make no apology for having gone so much at length into this argument of Lord Milton's, as the truth or falsity of it appears to me a question of paramount importance. His style is so temperate, and his arguments so plausible, that I am not surprised that his pamphlet should have already arrived at a third edition. But this only makes

investigation the more necessary ; and the more insidious an error is, the more imperative it is to probe it to the uttermost.

Before I dismiss this part of my subject, I shall shortly advert to a proposition which is frequently and confidently advanced by the economists, but which appears to me to be open to considerable doubt. The whole imports of the kingdom, they say, are paid for either in manufactures or bullion ; but bullion itself is procured only in exchange for manufactures. Hence there can be no import without either directly or indirectly a corresponding export ; and consequently an increased import must be followed by an increased foreign trade.

A little consideration will shew us that this is not a *necessary* consequence. In the event of importing a new article of consumption, if the exporting nation will take our manufactures in return, the position will then undoubtedly hold true. If she will take those of another nation with whom we trade, and with whom we can increase our trade to that extent, it will also be true. But if she will do neither of these, or to less than the full extent of her demand, then it is clear that the value of the whole import, or of the difference, as the case may be, must be paid in bullion.

But the annual supply of bullion cannot be increased, unless the demand for our manufactures

in the countries producing the bullion increase at the same time. And even though there should be this contemporaneous demand, yet, to meet the question, it must be coextensive also. Any deficiency, therefore, in the balance of trade that is to be made good in bullion beyond the ordinary supply of it, can be liquidated only out of the accumulated bullion or capital of the country.

Now, let us suppose that, in consequence of an alteration in the corn-laws, England were to import from the Baltic and the Black Sea a fourth part of her consumption, or about five millions of quarters of wheat, and about the same amount in value of all other corn. Taking the wheat at 40s. per quarter, we should have an import of 20,000,000*l.* sterling. Now, it is absurd to suppose that those nations could at once alter their habits and customs, and create a demand at all approaching to this amount—a demand equal to half the whole exports of the kingdom. A quarter of this is more than it would probably attain. But the bullion countries are similarly situated, and their markets fully supplied. An attempt to crowd in upon them more goods, would be only to lower the price. You would export more merchandise, but you would receive the same amount of bullion in return. The habits of nations are slowly changed ; and though, from peculiar circumstances, large tracts of land in the north of Europe might be brought into immediate cultivation

to supply the English market, yet it by no means follows, that the boors that inhabit them would require a single additional bale of merchandise in exchange. Such a demand, it is true, might probably ultimately arise, but, in the *interim*, what would be our state at home?

There is another point, not altogether unconnected with my subject, to which I shall advert before I conclude, and that is tithes. Tithes are a property that have generally been considered as a tax upon improvements,* and so far, consequently, as having a tendency to diminish the market for labour. That the first part of the proposition is true, few I believe will now deny; that they actually diminish labour to any great extent, as a *general* position, appears to me very

* If agricultural capital, say 100*l.* be laid out on tithe-free land, it is sufficient if the produce replace the capital, together with the ordinary rate of profit, say ten per cent.; or, if the produce sell for 110*l.* But, if the same capital be applied to land subject to tithe, then the produce must replace the capital together with $22\frac{2}{3}$ per cent. instead of 10 per cent. For, the produce being now 122*⅔l.*, it will distribute itself into capital 100*l.*, tithe 12*⅔l.*, profit 10*l.* Hence, tithe is to profit on capital as $12\frac{2}{3}$ to 10, or as 11 to 9. This observation applies only in its full extent to such capital as is to be replaced by the produce of the particular crop on which it is expended. If the capital is to be replaced in a given number of years, instead of in the same year, then the proportions will be altered; and in general, tithe will be found to be equal to the ninth part of the capital replaced, together with a ninth part of the profit raised.

questionable. Of the tithe-free lands I am acquainted with, I cannot affirm in general, that I see a greater proportion of capital applied to them than to those that are not so ; and I am therefore at a loss to understand why we should anticipate a more extended employment of capital in an open market, than what now takes place when there is a monopoly of the exemption. Nevertheless, to those who really desire to improve their land, tithes are a grievous impost. When a man purchases an estate, he purchases it subject to the tithe *that exists* upon it ; and to the extent that *that* tithe forms a deduction in the price, it has clearly never become his property. That he might like to possess himself of it, as he might of his neighbour's field, is one question ; but that he had a right to do so, is as palpably untrue in the one case as in the other. He had bought only nine-tenths of the produce ; how then could he claim the other tenth ? To that he is only a trustee. But when, beyond the purchase-money, and beyond the ordinary working of the farm, he lays out additional capital in improvements ; when he creates, at his own expense, by his own skill, and at *his own risk*, a new produce that never before existed, over which the church had never before any claims, he naturally asks why he is not to enjoy *the whole of this* ? He asks of this new claimant, whether she has done any thing to entitle her to a share of the profits ; or, in the

.

event of a failure, whether she is prepared to participate in the loss ; and what is harder still, there may be an additional produce, though raised not only without a profit, but at a positive loss ; and yet she may still assert her right to her increased share of the crop. To maintain the existing right to tithes to its full extent, is to assert, that the capital, the industry, and the skill of present generations were the property of the dead of a thousand years ago.

It is this feeling, pervading even those most friendly to the Establishment, that has created such a general call for an alteration of the system ; and it is as to the principles upon which that alteration should proceed, that I wish to offer a few observations.

It is laid down by Mr. M'Culloch, "Supplement to Encyclopædia Brit." article Taxation, that tithes and other taxes upon raw produce, do not fall upon rent, but on the consumers of raw produce. Now, if Mr. M'Culloch be right—and upon that I offer no opinion—if there is to be a commutation, the consumers, that is, the nation, who reap the benefit, are the parties who ought to pay the compensation. It would be most unjust to call upon one class to pay for that, in the extinction of which all are equally interested.

Mr. M'Culloch, following Mr. Ricardo, lays it down, "that a tax laid exclusively upon the profits of the farmer, would really cause an imme-

diate *increase of rent*. No rent ever enters into the cost of producing that portion of the required supply of raw produce raised by the agency of the capital last laid out on the land. It is plainly impossible, therefore, that its raisers could indemnify themselves for any burdens laid on them by making an equivalent deduction from rent. And hence, when a tax is laid exclusively on the profits of agricultural capital, the price of raw produce must sustain a corresponding rise; for, in the event of its not rising, the producers of that portion which pays no rent would abandon their business, and the necessary supplies would not be obtained. Inasmuch, however, as the rise in price, which is required to remunerate those who raise corn that pays no rent, after a tax is imposed on profits, must be *universal*, it must *raise rent*." * * *

"If land yielded no surplus to its possessors above the common and ordinary profit of the capital employed in its cultivation, it is plain that the imposition of a *tax* on its produce, a *tithe*, for example, would occasion an equivalent *increase of its price*. The level of profit may be temporarily, but it cannot be permanently, elevated or depressed in any particular branch of industry. And as there can be no reason why the agriculturists should content themselves with a reduced rate of profit, when all other employments are yielding a higher rate, as soon as tithes were imposed, they would set about transferring a portion of their stock to

some more lucrative business; and this transference would be continued until the diminution of supply had raised prices to their proper level, and restored the equilibrium of profit. In such a state of things, tithes would indisputably operate precisely as an equivalent addition to the price of raw produce. * * * If tithes were only levied from the superior soils, they would not, after inferior soils had been cultivated, occasion any rise in price, but would fall entirely on the rent of the landlord. But this is not the case with tithes. They affect every quality of land *indiscriminately*; and being exacted equally from the produce raised in the least favourable, as from that which is raised in the most favourable circumstances, occasion only an increase of prices. * * * That tithes and other taxes on raw produce do not form a deduction from rent, but go to increase the price of produce, is obvious from the circumstance that the tithe of expensive crops, and which require a great expenditure in their cultivation, frequently amounts to more than *four* or *five* times the rent of the land. The tithe of an acre of land in hops is frequently from 3*l.* to 4*l.*, and the rent at no period worth more than 40*s.* or 50*s.*; and the tithe of an acre of carrot-seed is 7*l.* or 8*l.* upon land not worth more than 20*s.* In such cases, it is plainly as great an absurdity to affirm, that tithes fall exclusively upon the rent of the landlord, as it would be to affirm that a *part* is greater than

the *whole*. Tithes are not a *local*, but a *general* burden, and fall equally on the consumers of the tithed article."

Hence, then, if this view be correct, tithes and all other taxes exclusively upon agriculture, instead of being deductions from, cause an augmentation of rent, and consequently their abolition would reduce it back again to its natural level. Now all the plans for a commutation of tithes that I have seen, pre-suppose that it is to be at the expense of the landlord. Whether it be a corn-rent, or a species of land-tax, it is still to be paid *by him*, and not by the producer; and if an actual redemption is to take place, the value of it is to come from *his* capital. Let us now suppose, by one or other of these means, that tithe is abolished, and therefore no longer forms a portion of the cost of production. From that moment, according to Mr. M'Culloch, *prices will fall, and with them, necessarily, rents*. Hence the price, and that no small one, that will have been paid by the land-owner to secure a benefit, will become the purchase-money of a positive loss; and he will be called upon to pay twice over for the redemption of that of which the consumer alone will reap the advantage.*

* Should the present amount of duty upon foreign corn be lowered, and, consequently, the protection to the agriculturist diminished, it appears to me, that the revenue gained at his expense should in justice be applied to remove some of those

The incidence of tithes is a question of great difficulty. The theory of Mr. M'Culloch is opposed to that of Adam Smith, and it is not easy, perhaps, to demonstrate the truth. Mr. M'Culloch's doctrine, however, especially at this time, deserves minute investigation; for, if it be true, if we are not careful, we may find that while we are grasping at a substance we may be deluded with a shadow.

I shall conclude, with noticing an observation of Mr. Senior's on this subject, as to the nature of the commutation. "A tax in money or corn on rent would produce present relief. In time, however, the landlords would feel only the burden, and would forget that the tithes had been surrendered to them as an equivalent. And even if they continued to pay the tax, *they would call out for corn-laws and restrictions as an indemnity.*"* The meaning of this passage is too plain to be mis-

burdens that are laid almost exclusively on land. Tithe is of this description. Should it also be applied in reduction of the poor-rates, by promoting emigration, that would seem peculiarly just. Both tithe and poor-rate, in proportion to rent, press with greater severity upon the poorer soils; and as those descriptions of land would suffer most from the reduction of protection, it would be but fair that they should receive a corresponding advantage in the way I suggest. I do not, however, by any means intend to say, that this would be an *equivalent*.

* Letter to Lord Howick, p. 58.

understood. The rate of compensation is to be fixed when corn is artificially supported by restrictive laws; and when once the tax ceases to fall on the producer, the reason for the protection is no longer to be allowed. The land-owner may indeed, or he may not, have received an equivalent for the price of commutation; but that equivalent was the tithes of *protected* corn;* but with the economists it is no robbery to make him pay an enhanced price for that, and then, in the very next session of parliament, to remove the protection.

I have written these remarks for the serious

* Tithe, according to Mr. M'Culloch, raises the price of raw produce. It consequently raises its own price, being itself part of that raw produce. To estimate, therefore, its *present* value as the price of commutation, would be to estimate it ten per cent too high. The produce, now forming the tithe, that would be handed over as the equivalent, would, upon the extinction of tithe, immediately fall by all the difference by which tithe had before enhanced the price. A commutation, therefore, upon the *present* value of tithe would be a gross deception. Neither would a corn-rent in lieu of tithes entirely remove this difficulty. An alteration in the markets, arising from a variety of causes, might throw the poor lands altogether out of cultivation, or, at any rate, reduce them from a state of tillage to that of pasture. A corn-rent, therefore, would be in effect to exact *rectorial* tithes from land after it had ceased to produce any but *vicarial* tithes, or perhaps even no titheable produce at all.

consideration of the agriculturist. His class is valuable and powerful, if united ; but his enemies are numerous, intelligent, and combined.

Maresfield, Dec. 15th, 1832.

THE END.

LONDON :

J. MOVES, CASTLE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.



